BY WAY OF ILLUSTRATION

A Collection of Stories, Illustrations, and Analogies for Preachers

BY

C. A. AULT

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.
LONDON AND OXFORD

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SAY A PRAYER FOR
FR. BARTHOLOMEW DE LA TORRE, O.P.
WESTERN DOMINICAN PROVINCE

Heath Dudley

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BY

C. A. AULT

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE REV. P. H. ROGERS

Vicar of S. Mary's, Brookfield

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PREFACE

GEORGE Herbert, writing of the means by which the parson, when preaching, procures the attention of his listeners, says : 'Sometimes he tells them stories and sayings of others, according as his text invites him, for them also men heed and remember better than exhortations, which though earnest yet often die with the sermon.'

The best illustrations are those which fall within our own personal experience, for we shall tell them better, and it is the way in which the tale is told that counts. But the preacher's stock of these is necessarily limited, and when he turns for help to books of stories he finds them for the most part feeble and unconvincing.

This little book will, I venture to think, prove an acceptable one to many of the clergy, not only because it provides material of a better quality than most others of its kind, but also because it is not confined to stories but includes 'sayings' from well-known writers, which provide apt illustration. Moreover, it is so arranged that the preacher can turn directly to the subject he desires to illustrate, without hunting through many pages in the hope of finding something to his purpose.

The compiler is a devout member of my congregation, and I gladly wish this book Godspeed.

PHILIP H. ROGERS.

S. MARY'S BROOKFIELD.
August, 1928.

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INTRODUCTION

THE compiler of this little volume has been impressed by the need for some such collection of illustrations to aid the busy parson in the preparation of his sermons. No one who has been associated with the working of a parish can fail to know what inroads are often made on the little time available for this part of his work. It is in order to avoid needless searching through many probably familiar volumes and books of reference for an apposite story or quotation that this little collection has been put together, and if it provides the parish priest with any more leisure to meet the thousand and one calls made upon him, it will have served its purpose.

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By Way of Illustration

THE SUPREME ADVENTURE

I REMEMBER reading a novel of Max Pemberton's. It pictures a man about town coming to his place of business, passing through the outer clerks' office into his inner sanctum. There he locks the door, and brings out of his desk, not his business papers or his account books—but a boy's book of adventure. The Englishman is incurably romantic, longing for romance and adventure.

Children are always crying, 'What next? What next?' They are all for fresh things. It is only right that they should be. It is our blessed religion and that alone which can satisfy that instinct. It is the Supreme Adventure, the knight of God seeking his adventure in the world. The field of his adventure is God Himself.

You may travel for many days at sea, and be quite unable to discern any progress. The vast ocean lies behind you and ahead of you, and you

pass no landmarks. Yet each hour is bringing you nearer the haven where you would be.

God did not make men perfect. He made them pilgrims after perfection.

Henry Ward Beecher.

There is no moving staircase in the Christian path. We must tread every step of it ourselves.

In the olden days, when a lad reached manhood, he was given his armour and his name. The armour and the sword were placed on the altar in the chapel, and all night the lad knelt and kept his vigil of prayer before the altar. The familiar picture 'The Vigil' represents such a scene. It was no easy thing to do. There was the cold and the darkness—there was the weariness. It was to teach him that he was not to treat himself softly. He was not to be treated like a woman. He was a man now ; he was to be no shirker, no coward. He was to pray that he might never be a traitor, but might fight and struggle, and die, if need be, for the right. All night long he watched and prayed, and in the morning Mass was said, and the priest set the Body of Christ upon his lips. Then he took the oath of allegiance to his

over-lord, and promised, in every fight, to be faithful to the end.

It is related of the Dominican Suso that soon after he became a monk he was crossing one day the Lake of Constance, and beside him in the boat there sat a young knight who told him that he was on his way to arrange a tournament in which many were to take part. 'And what is the prize?' asked Suso. 'A gold ring,' was the answer. 'It will be won by him who best bears wounds and bruises and who holds out the longest.' 'How much,' thought the monk, 'are these men willing to endure for a prize so trifling! Oh, to be such a knight of God!' And he came to think of his life in the terms of chivalry, as a tourneying for the Lord, in which he might fight manfully and bear cheerfully whatever blows were dealt him.

THE HOLY ANGELS

A STORY is told of the late Bishop King of Lincoln. When a curate in Oxfordshire in his early days, he was sent for late one evening to baptize a sick child in the little village of Wheatley. The road was dark and lonely, but King set out on his errand. Arrived at the cottage, however, he found there was no child there, and no message had been sent him. It was apparently a mistake, or a hoax, and he tramped the long walk back again alone.

Many years afterwards, when he had become bishop, he visited a large prison in his diocese. One of the prisoners, apparently touched by the bishop's saintliness and sympathy, called him back just as he was leaving the cell. 'Do you remember,' he asked, 'being called upon to christen a dying child at Wheatley late at night many years ago?' 'Yes, I remember it,' said the bishop, 'it appeared to have been a hoax.' 'It was,' said the man, and went on to explain he had planned to send the message, and to hide and rob the bishop on the dark road. He asked the bishop's forgiveness, and it was freely given. 'But why didn't you rob me, as you had planned?' 'Well,' replied the man, 'you

see I hadn't bargained for there being two of you.'

S. Francis de Sales, before he began to preach, used to salute the angels of all the people gathered before him.

The life of the Venerable Bede at the monastery at Jarrow was a full one. Reading, teaching, writing his wonderful books, training his pupils, he found great happiness in it all. But he never missed the offices in the church. 'The angels,' he would say, 'must not miss me from among the brethren. Would they not ask, "Where is Bede?"'

There is a story, how true we do not know, that in his latter days the Venerable Bede became blind, and a boy used to lead him about. Thinking to play him a trick, the boy took him one day—a heartless prank—to a stony piece of ground, and told him there was a crowd gathered to hear him preach. And the old man preached to the silent stones and the empty air. But it is said that at the end of his sermon, the stones cried out in answer, 'Amen, Venerable Bede!' And like an echo the angel voices cried down to him from the heavenly places, 'Amen, Amen, Venerable Bede!'

A teacher had been explaining to her children the office of the Guardian Angels, and a day or two later she found one of her small girls waiting on the kerb very anxiously and afraid to cross the road. 'There 's nothing to be afraid of,' she said, taking the child's hand. 'And you remember I told you God sent His angels to take care of us.' 'Yes, I know,' said the child, 'but you see I asked Him to send a policeman.'

There is a story of a somewhat lazy boy who was fond of singing about the house 'I wish I were an angel.' One day his mother sent him to fetch his Sunday picture-book and find all the pictures he could of angels. He found the angel baking a cake for poor tired Elijah; he found an angel guarding Daniel all night from the lions; and another angel showing Hagar where to find the water. Yet another angel was helping S. Peter to escape from prison. 'If you *were* an angel,' said the boy's mother, 'you would be given plenty of work to help other people.'

One snowy night an old priest went down to take his usual service in his parish church, but found that none of his congregation had turned up, owing to the severe weather, and he said the service alone. On his journey

homeward he overtook a friend, who said condolingly, 'I don't suppose you had many with you at church to-night?' 'There were thousands in church with me!' was the answer. The holy angels are always in attendance in God's house.

BAPTISM

It is said that when S. Francis de Sales was a little child he was once found conducting a number of children in procession round the font in the parish church, making them kneel around it and kiss its base, and then sing the *Gloria*. A thanksgiving for baptism.

S. Augustine of Hippo regarded his baptism as marking definitely the end of his old life and the beginning of the new one. He was so conscious of the spiritual re-birth of which baptism was the outward sign, that in his *Confessions* he was able to write about his former unregenerate self as though he were writing about another person whom he had once known.

'But I was free-born!' cries S. Paul. It is natural to be proud of the country of our birth; and surely natural to be more than proud of—to cherish a deep thankfulness for—that re-birth in the kingdom of God in baptism.

When at the beginning of the struggle for independence the fifty-five delegates from eleven

American colonies met at Smith's Tavern at Philadelphia, on September 5, 1774, a question arose as to their numerical claims for representation. But the colonies had lost their jealousies of rival states in the common cause of justice. 'I am not a Virginian,' said Patrick Henry, 'I am an American!' It was the feeling of them all. Baptism is our birth into that larger kingdom—the kingdom which is more than world-wide.

CHEERFULNESS

S. Teresa used to tell her daughters that God is not so little-minded as they seemed to think, and that they would not serve Him well if they were fidgety and fretful in their efforts. 'To walk cheerfully and freely in God's service' was her favourite advice.

A vigorous plant cannot be raised without sunshine ; nor can any nature be truly strong and helpful without cheerfulness.

The blessing of a house is goodness. The honour of a house is hospitality. The ornament of a house is cleanliness. The happiness of a house is contentment.

S. Francis of Assisi, most joyful of all saints, would have all his brethren cheerful. Not even when they were troubled by their sins and imperfections were they to have gloomy faces. 'Why make an outward show of sadness for thy offences?' he would say. 'Keep this sadness between thyself and God, and pray that He may spare thee and restore thy gladness, but do not show a troubled face before thy brothers.'

CHILDREN

THERE is an old couple in our village who are past work. The married daughter has made shift to take her mother and the parish half-crown, but there is neither room nor food for the father, and he must go. If husband and wife went together they would be separated at the workhouse door.

The parting had to come ; it came yesterday. I saw them stumbling lamely down the road on their last journey together, walking side by side without touch or speech, seeing and heeding nothing but a blank future. As they passed me the old man said gruffly, ' 'Tis far eno' ; better be getting back ' ; but the woman shook her head, and they breasted the hill together.

At the top they paused, shook hands, and separated ; one went on, the other turned back ; and as the old woman limped blindly by I turned away, for there are sights a man dare not look upon. She passed, and I heard a child's shrill voice say, ' I came to look for you, Gran ' ; and I thanked God that there need be no utter loneliness in the world while it holds a little child.

Michael Fairless.

Every child comes into the world with the message that God does not yet despair of man.

You will remember George Eliot's tale in *Silas Marner* of the poor weaver—quite unfit by temperament to battle with the world—whose early life is spoilt by a friend's treachery. Unable to bear old associations, he leaves his own town and settles in a country district, where he earns his living by weaving, but shuns his kind. He has lost faith in them.

Little by little his interest in life is narrowed down to the growing pile of gold coins which he manages to save by his labours, and secretes under the floor of his lonely cottage. Then the second great sorrow of his life comes to him, for the gold is stolen, and with its loss the one object of Silas's life is gone. But it is just by that loss that he is brought back to all the beauty of human life and love again, for one evening a tiny baby girl, whose mother has perished in the snow, toddles in at the open door, and Silas, returning, finds her on the hearth, just where he had formerly buried his golden store. To his poor mazed mind it seems to him at first that the golden curls are his gold restored to him in some mysterious way. But she has brought more than that into his life. She has brought warmth and love and life, and all the wealth of human feeling. The story of

little Eppie and her foster father is one of the sweetest and most human ever penned.

Father Hugh Benson tells the story of a village boy who was an idiot. Neither the local preachers nor the clergyman of the village could do anything in the way of teaching him. To see this boy troubled the faith of the man who is recounting the tale. He seemed an example of what appeared like a carelessness on the part of Almighty God, of a want of love for this child of His.

But one Christmas Eve the man was returning from a long tramp over the hills. His path lay along the upper edge of a disused stone quarry, and all at once his eye was caught by the steady glimmer of light somewhere in the dimness beneath, and the sound of a voice. He sought the opening and found himself at length in the heart of the quarry, and there was the glimmering light, but as he approached it, it went out. He called, but the only reply was the confused sound of footsteps scrambling, and in a moment more he saw the climbing figure of the village idiot against the skyline. Then it disappeared. The man turned back to the quarry, where was cut a little platform, and this is what he saw, as he lighted a match and looked around.

There was a short halter, with a kind of rude head-stall, fastened to a rusty iron staple driven

into the rock, and a little pile of cut grass below it. A kind of mud trough had been constructed against the stone, with a little straw in it and holly berries and leaves in front of it. There were marks of hobnailed boots here and there. So much he saw, when the match burned his fingers, but just before he dropped it he noticed something else which made him open his box and light another match. Then he saw the end of a farthing taper sticking out of the ground into which it had been pushed. He pulled it out and lighted it, and then he noticed the last thing. Quite plainly marked on the soft edge of the mud-trough was the mark of a tiny child's naked foot, as if a baby had stood in the manger, with one foot on the floor and another on the edge.

'The story seems to show,' the tale concludes, 'that intellect has not much to do with the knowledge of God ; and that the things which He hides from the wise and prudent He reveals to babes.'

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Holy Catholic Church is a great fact of life. On Michaelmas Day (says the Rev. J. F. Briscoe) I had to go and preach at Southampton, and after the service there came in some Greek sailors. They could not speak one word of English, but they went round the church with me, pointing out here, and here, and here—the altar, the crucifix, the banners, the font, and they gave to each a Greek name. They recognized that they were in their home. 'Here is the very same religion that we have in Greece. Here is the altar, the Saviour of the world, the font in Baptism, the Holy Mother.' It was most striking to see those Greek sailors recognizing in England the Holy Catholic Church.

'Padre,' said an African scout to his scoutmaster, 'how is it that all the people of that village are Christians?'

'It's because, many years ago,' was the reply, 'the people were being carried off by the slave gangs, and the English bluejackets rescued them and cared for them, and the mission taught them the Christian faith.'

'I suppose,' said the boy, 'they rescued them because they were civilized?'

'No, not that,' said the Padre, 'it was because they were Christians, and knew that God is our Father and that all men are brothers.'

'Why,' said the boy, 'it's just like scouting!'

'No,' said he, 'scouting is just like it!'

'Francis,' came the Voice to Francis of Assisi, 'seest thou not that My house is in ruins? Go and restore it for Me.' And Francis sprang up, in his own impetuous fashion, to do the thing at once. It was the little church of S. Damian, truly enough in ruins. He would rebuild it without delay, so he first sold his own horse, and several bales of his father's cloth.

But that was not the way, and it is not surprising that old Peter Bernardone took exception to his son's making free with his goods in that fashion. A lengthy quarrel ensued, and finally Francis was summoned to the bishop's court, where ensued that strange scene when Francis restored to his father all he had, even to the very clothes he wore—and went forth singing in the frosty air, clad in a hair-shirt.

But he had come back to the question of building S. Damian's, and he realized that the way to build a church is not to become entangled in bargains. 'The way to build a church is not to pay for it,' says Mr. G. K. Chesterton, 'certainly not with some one else's

money. The way to build a church is not even to pay for it with your own money. The way to build a church is to build it.'

So Francis set about collecting stones, begging stones of all he met, carting them like a beast of burden, and setting them one by one in place until the little church was finally rebuilt.

One's native place, says Mr. Hilaire Belloc, is the shell of one's soul, and one's church is the kernel of that nut.

There is a legend that during those great Forty Days, of which we know so little, our Lord went round the world and set the impress of His sacred Feet on every place where there would one day be an altar erected to His glory. We can think of Him coming first to one place and then another, setting the impress of His Feet here in this great cathedral, this little mission church in Africa, and in the parish church we love so dearly. It is, of course, only legend, yet it is a beautiful thought that He has marked our churches as His own.

It is strange to realize, says a visitor in Rotterdam, that every drop of water in these city-bound canals is related to every other drop of water in the other canals of Holland, how-

ever distant. So is every Christian related to all others in the Church of Christ.

'The Empire is still in building,' is the slogan of the British Empire Campaign. It is heartening to remember that the Church is still in building, and that it is our privilege to take our share in the work in our generation.

Mr. Gladstone (says the Rev. J. F. Briscoe) used often to say what an immense epoch in his life it was when there dawned on him, as he used to describe it, the august conception of the Church. And he used to describe how it came to him in a flash, as he stood for the first time in the great church of S. Peter in Rome, a vision of the new Jerusalem come down from heaven. And, as well, this conception was borne in upon his mind, and explained and carried further and made more definite, by a chance study that he made about the same time in the unexplored byways of the Occasional Offices in the Book of Common Prayer.

Some one ought to have said to Mr. Gladstone that there was not the least need for him to go so far afield as to S. Peter's in Rome, or to explore the Occasional Offices of the Book of Common Prayer, to realize how august, how majestic, is any right conception of the Church. Some one ought to have said to him, 'You

have only got to open your Bible. Here it is plain in the Gospel—one of the plainest of Gospel facts—certain, absolute, the Holy Catholic Church.'

Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God Who made
him sees
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon
his knees.
So when your work is finished, you can wash
your hands and pray
For the Glory of the Garden that it may not pass
away !
And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass
away !

Rudyard Kipling.

CONCENTRATION

In the quaint picture of S. Jerome by Albrecht Dürer is depicted a glimpse of the saint's room. It seems to be nothing but a sixteenth-century room. In the forefront is a very strange domestic pet, the lion that is traditionally connected with S. Jerome. Next to the lion there is the watch-dog. Opposite, on the wall, there are various household accessories—some shelves, a candlestick, a large pair of scissors, a string of onions ; near-by the saint's cardinal's hat, and then a large hour-glass. Then, hanging from the ceiling, an enormous pumpkin, which would be the glory of any country harvest thanksgiving.

At the table, bending over his work, is the saint. His attitude suggests that the work upon which he is engaged is the one piece of work in the world really worth doing. He is entirely absorbed in it. It is a picture of entire concentration.

Concentration is the act of bringing all things to a common centre. Concentration in prayer —all things brought to God—the centre of the Christian's life.

There is a strange description of the saintly

Charles de Foucauld, priest and explorer, walking ahead of his caravan guides in prayer and meditation. He had no watch, and asked one of the White Fathers, who followed behind, to tell him when a fresh hour started. Every time the hand approached the head of the dial, the timekeeper, mounted on his camel, struck a few blows on a tin can. The noise was carried along by the hot air, which was otherwise soundless. Then, far ahead, the perpetual walker never stopped, but turned round and made a bow of thanks.

René Bazin.

COURAGE

Sir J. M. Barrie, in his rectorial address delivered at St. Andrews University in 1922, says, of courage :

I cannot provide you with that staff for your journey. You shall cut it—so it is ordained—every one for himself, and its name is Courage. It is the lovely virtue—the rib of Himself that God sent down to His children.

He goes on to speak of W. S. Henley, who wrote those splendid words :

> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul.

I found, he says, the other day an old letter from Henley that told me of the circumstances in which he wrote the poem. ' I was a patient,' he writes, ' in the old infirmary of Edinburgh. I had heard vaguely of Lister, and went there as a sort of forlorn hope on the chance of saving my foot. The great surgeon received me, as he did and does everybody, with the greatest kindness, and for twenty months I lay in one or other ward of the old place under his care. It was a desperate business, but he saved my foot, and here I am.' There he was, and what he

was doing during that 'desperate business' was singing that he was master of his fate.

Still talking of courage, Sir J. M. Barrie says :

I should like to read you some passages of a letter from a man of another calling. I have the little filmy sheets here. It is a letter to me from Captain Scott of the Antarctic, and was written in the tent you know of, where it was found long afterwards with his body and those of some other very gallant gentlemen, his comrades. The writing is in pencil, still quite clear, though toward the end some of the words trail away into the great silence that was waiting for them. It begins :

'We are pegging out in a very comfortless spot. Hoping this letter may be found and sent to you, I write you a word of farewell. I want you to think of me and my end. . . . Good-bye—I am not at all afraid of the end, but sad to miss many a simple pleasure which I had planned for the future in our long marches. . . . We are in a desperate state, feet frozen, etc., no fuel, and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and our cheery conversation. . . .' (Later—it is here that the words become difficult.) 'We are very near the end. We did intend to finish ourselves when things

proved like this, but we have decided to die naturally without.'

When I think of Scott (says Sir J. M. Barrie) I remember the strange Alpine story of the youth who fell down a glacier and was lost, and of how a scientific companion, one of several who accompanied him, all young, computed that the body would again appear at a certain date and place many years afterwards. When that time came round some of the survivors returned to the glacier to see if the prediction would be fulfilled ; they were all old men now, and the body reappeared as young as on the day he left them. So Scott and his comrades emerge out of the white immensities always young.

A French soldier in the Great War lay in terrible suffering, and the chaplain came to see what he could do for him. Afterwards a friend asked him, ' Did the priest's visit comfort you ? ' ' No,' he answered. ' It didn't comfort me, and I don't know that I want to be comforted, but it fortified me.'

One of the most splendid stories ever told is that of Sir Arthur Pearson, who used the great tragedy of his life—his blindness—in such a way that it has brought a lasting blessing into the lives of countless other men.

He would not allow the loss of sight to be a drawback—he made of it a stepping-stone from which to stretch out a hand to those many others blinded in the war. So long as a man had the courage to face life, he insisted, so long would life be compelled to give him of its best. The keynote of the S. Dunstan education was courage. Talking of blindness to a new-comer on his first visit, Sir Arthur said : ' It's not pleasant at first, but that can't be helped. What you've got to do is to call it a beastly nuisance, and then carry on and forget about it. That 's all there is to it.' It would have seemed a callous speech from one gifted with sight, but from the man who was facing the difficulties of blindness himself, what fresh heart it put into them !

Sir Arthur ascribed the rapid success of the pupils at S. Dunstan's to the fact, among others, that most of the teachers were themselves blind. The men felt, ' I am not being asked to do something which is impossible by some one who does not understand. I am being shown the right way. This man who is blind knows what he is doing, and I, too, can do it.'

' It is literally true,' said one speaker, ' to say that Sir Arthur's own blindness, whatever the weight of affliction may mean to him, has been a blessing to every blind person in Great Britain, and that cannot be an unrelieved sorrow which can bring gladness to so many.'

This story of a girl's courage comes from Lancashire. The girl was bathing with her younger brother and some other children in a pond, when the boy found himself beyond his depth. He cried out and his sister swam out to save him, but she, too, went beyond her depth, and both brother and sister were drowned. The other children stood terrified and helpless on the bank, but the little girl, as she rose to the surface for the last time, called out to them, 'Good night!'

In the Boys' Festival held in Japan in the month of May each year, the visitor will notice a large red paper fish—a carp—hung at the corners of the houses. A red fish denotes the eldest son, and black ones the younger sons of the house, so that the number of boys in the family can be told at a glance.

The carp has been chosen for the boys' emblem, because it is a fish that always swims upstream. It is a symbol to the boy of Japan that he must learn to fight and overcome difficulties, and not swim with the stream and take the line of least resistance.

Not so long ago the newspapers had an account of a little nine-year-old boy who was knocked down by a motor-car, and had his leg pinned in the machinery. It was found

necessary to perform an operation on the leg in the street. The operation took three-quarters of an hour, and when it was over the child had been lying under the car for an hour and a half. His father arrived on the scene from a football match, and the boy, who had shown great pluck and courage during the whole ordeal, cried out, 'I am all right, Daddy!'

COURTESY

Courtesy was one of the characteristics of S. Francis of Assisi. It is told of him that when he was selling velvet and embroideries to some solid merchant in the town, a beggar broke in upon the transaction, imploring alms. Francis seems to have been in doubt as to whom he should attend to first, his father's customer or this poor man, but he managed to finish his business with the merchant and then turned, with his usual courtesy, to give consideration to the wants of the beggar. By that time, however, the beggar had vanished. Francis hurried from his booth, leaving all the bales of silks and velvets behind him, and went racing across the market place. Still running, he threaded the labyrinth of the narrow and crooked streets of the little town, searching for his beggar. When he eventually ran him to earth, he loaded the astonished man with money. Then he vowed one of those splendid vows which made the life of Francis the glory that it is—a vow that never in his life would he refuse help to any poor man.

It is said of one of the greatest of modern painters that he lives in lodgings in London, far

from his native Holland, and on the walls of his sitting-room are some dreadful oleographs which he will not ask his landlady to remove for fear of hurting her feelings.

Of Courtesy it is much less
Than Courage of Heart or Holiness,
Yet in my Walks it seems to me
That the Grace of God is in Courtesy.

Hilaire Belloc.

No man is too big to be kind and courteous, but many are too little.

THE CROSS

S. Francis de Sales tells the story of a child carrying a pail of water. She carried a piece of wood in the pail to steady the water, so that it did not spill over. So we must carry the Cross in our hearts to steady them from swaying to and fro.

Garibaldi's challenge to his soldiers is one of the finest ever recorded :

'Soldiers, what I have to offer you is fatigue, danger, struggle, and death ; the chill of the cold night in the free air, and heat under the burning sun ; no lodgings, no munitions, no provisions, but forced marches, dangerous watch-posts, and the continual struggle with the bayonet against batteries ; those who love freedom and their country will follow me.'

It will not readily be forgotten how they followed for the cause of freedom.

Every time we make the sign of the Cross we make the letter 'I,' and then we cross it out. We ourselves are to be nothing, that God may be everything.

It was a lesson to the infants on Passion Sunday, and they had been told of the weight of our Lord's Cross along the road, and of how Simon of Cyrene had been called in to bear it. That the story was very real and living to the little ones was evidenced when one of the smallest of the boys interrupted with, 'But *I* would have helped Him to carry it!' It was the response of a loving heart.

In the poem *The Changed Cross* the story is told of one who complained that his cross was too heavy, that he could no longer bear it. There were brought to him many other crosses, and he was bidden make his choice. So he tried them one by one. He could not look up under the weight of the first. He took up another, but that fitted his shoulders worse still. And one by one he laid them down again. At length he came to his own cross again, and as he fitted it across his shoulders, he found he could bear it with more ease. It was the same cross, but it was changed because of the changed spirit with which he now took it up. He had learned his lesson.

Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back.

He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross,

and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.

Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death.'

John Bunyan.

The yoke that is easy and light is the yoke that is well-fitting. It is the yoke that is loose that galls one's neck. The only kind of obedience which is ever really happy is that which is *thorough.*

Sadhu Sundar Singh tells a story which illustrates the ransom paid by our Lord for sinners. Two young men were caught gambling, and such an offence was punishable by a fine of five hundred rupees. They were taken prisoners. The parents of one of them were rich, and they soon paid the fine, and he was set free. But the other lad was the son of a peasant woman; he could not pay the fine, and was kept in prison. His mother set to work to earn the money for his release by carrying stones. Heavy and rough they were, and they cut her hands until the blood flowed. The lad saw her passing

from his window, and asked why her hands were bleeding, and she told him how she was working to free him. At last she saved the sum, and he was set free. Later on the rich young man asked him to join in a game of dice. But he could still see those wounded hands, and he knew at what a price he had been bought. He could not again look on the game which had brought such suffering to his mother.

There is this to notice about Simon of Cyrene. As he carried the Cross, it quite shut out the view of our Lord. The Cross came between him and Jesus ; he could only see His footsteps, and he just had to follow them.

Let us kiss the cross which Jesus sends, says Père de Foucauld. One can in this life only embrace Jesus by embracing His Cross.

A shepherd had to take his cattle across the river for grazing and bring them back at night. One evening he had difficulty in getting a cow and a calf across. He lashed them to make them go. In vain. He tried to lure them across with a bundle of hay, but that proved useless. Then he took the calf up and carried it across, and immediately the cow followed. It is sometimes thus that God calls us to seek Him.

Sadhu Sundar Singh.

DEATH

'Poor soul,' says one of Thomas Hardy's characters, lamenting the death of a neighbour, 'all her shining keys will be took from her, and her cupboards opened, and little things a' did'nt wish seen anybody will see ; and her wishes and ways will be all as nothing.'

'Death,' says Peter Pan, 'that is a great adventure.' Because it is a great adventure it will not be strange to us who are living the Catholic life, so full of adventure from beginning to end. Death is the greatest and last adventure this side of the grave. We are to take it—as we are to take all the adventures that God gives us—trustingly and willingly.

A blacksmith in a certain village refused to have anything to do with religion. The priest of the place invited him to come to church again and again, but his excuse was always that he was too busy. He had no time. One day, however, the priest went by the forge and found it shut and silent. The blacksmith

had died. He had had to find time to meet his Creator.

The Bishop of London tells a story of a child whom he visited when she lay dying. She was terrified at the thought of death. It was a going out into the great unknown. 'If I took you in my arms and carried you out into the next room,' he said to her, 'you wouldn't be afraid, would you?' 'Oh, no,' said the child, 'I shouldn't be frightened of that.' 'Well,' said he, 'that is just what it is to die. It is the Lord Jesus Who will come and take you in His arms and carry you into the next room.'

A little table stood in the sick room, covered with a white cloth. Two candles were burning, one on either side a crucifix. The priest entered, bearing the Blessed Sacrament, which he placed upon the table, and knelt before It. He rose and went to the bedside, and the others withdrew and left the two alone.

And then the feeble voice began. It was so weak, so broken, but it could just manage to say the things that really mattered. It was a very short confession, but there had never been one like it before for perfect frankness and real penitence. It ceased. Then the wonderful absolution: 'I absolve thee from all thy sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost, Amen.' Then the others came quietly back. How comfortably the Comfortable Words fell: 'Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.'

Then, 'We do not presume to come to this Thy table trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies'—ay, that was it, 'Thy manifold and great mercies'—the soul just washed in the precious Blood.

A hush. 'Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world.' 'The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.' It was over, and Jesus, the Friend of sinners, had come to His friend.

P. H. R.

Character does not change with death. However often a cobra may shed its skin, a cobra will still remain a cobra.

It is said that S. Thomas Aquinas was one evening kneeling in his chapel meditating upon the vision of the eternal God, and as he knelt, he became aware of some one close to him. He looked up, and there, beside him, stood the form of one of the friars of the Order who had recently entered into his rest. Here was one, back from the dead, thought S. Thomas, who

could tell him something of that Beatific Vision, and he eagerly besought him to enlighten him. But the only answer given by the friar was the words of the old psalm, 'In Thy light we shall see light.'

Lord Tennyson and Carlyle were once discussing the immortality of the soul, and Carlyle said: 'Old Jewish rags. You must clear your mind of all that. Why should there be a hereafter? Your traveller comes to an inn, and he takes his bed. It's only for one night. He leaves next day, and another man takes his place, and sleeps in the bed that he has vacated.'

'But,' answered Tennyson, 'your traveller comes to his inn and lies down in his bed, and leaves the inn in the morning, and goes on his way rejoicing, with a sure and certain hope and belief that he is going somewhere where he will sleep the next night.'

'Separated,' writes Père de Foucauld in the desert, speaking of the death of his friend's kinswoman, 'separated so long from souls so dear, when I hear of the departure of one of them for the fatherland, it seems to me that it is not a separation, but the beginning of reunion. I can speak to them, and they hear me; pray to them, and I hope they help me. It is the beginning of eternal union.'

René Bazin.

DETACHMENT

It is said of Cardinal Mazarin that when he was dying he went shuffling feebly along his picture galleries saying good-bye to his pictures—those beloved pictures, glowing in their beautiful colours. He was so reluctant to give them up, so bitter was the thought of parting with them.

There is an old inscription on a mosque at Agra which ascribes to Jesus the saying, 'The world is merely a bridge; ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings on it.'

It is related of one of the early nineteenth-century Earls of Shrewsbury that he kept a very poorly furnished room with little else than a bed and a table in it, and used, whenever he could, to retire to it from the splendour and luxury in which he was obliged to live. He sought this poverty and simplicity because it seemed to him that it was in this way he could best become detached from the world and imitate the Lord Jesus Christ.

When, says S. Augustine, we have to do with what attracts us, we are to look from the human attraction to the Divine Giver—to look beyond a beautiful face to God—to see God in His gifts.

Do as little children do, says S. Francis de Sales. Little children, who with one hand hold fast by their father, and with the other gather strawberries or blackberries along the hedges ; do you, while gathering and managing the goods of this world with one hand, with the other always hold fast the hand of your heavenly Father, turning to Him from time to time to see if your actions and occupations are pleasing to Him, but take heed above all things, that you never let go His hand, thinking to gather more ; for should He let you go, you will never be able to take another step without falling.

We should, says the saint, look to God from time to time like mariners, who, to arrive at the port to which they are bound, look more upward toward heaven than down on the sea on which they sail ; thus will God work with you, and in you, and for you.

The saintly Archbishop Fénelon had the misfortune, during his absence, to have his palace at Cambrai burned to the ground, and his most precious possessions destroyed. A friend hurried to court to break the bad news to Fénelon,

and found him sitting in his room talking very placidly. He began to approach the subject gently. 'Yes, thank you,' said the archbishop, 'I have heard the news from Cambrai. After all, it is better that my house should be burnt than the house of some peasants who would have lost everything.' And he resumed his conversation.

That was detachment.

DEVOTION

Devotion, says Bishop Phillips Brooks, is like the candle which Michael Angelo used to carry stuck in the pasteboard cap on his forehead, and which kept his own shadow from being cast upon his work when he was hewing out his statues.

If we perform our religious duties for love of our Lord, there is a freedom and a joy in our service. If it is just a question of duty, we are very glad when we can avoid them or hurry over them. We are like the old woman in Dickens who thought it her duty to read a chapter of the Bible every night, and who used to heave a great sigh when it was a long one.

S. Bernard of Clairvaux speaks in his *Book of the Love of God* of the four degrees of love. The first, in which a man loves himself alone and for his own sake ; the second, in which he loves God for the sake of the benefits he receives and expects from Him ; the third, in which he loves God for what He is in Himself, in His infinite loveliness and perfection. And the

fourth and highest degree is that in which he loves himself for God's sake.

To reach this state, says S. Bernard, is to become Godlike. As a drop of water poured into wine loses itself and takes the colour and savour of wine ; or as a bar of iron, heated red-hot, becomes like fire itself, forgetting its own substance; or as the air, radiant with sunbeams, seems not to be so much illuminated as to be light itself : so, in the saints, all human affections melt away, as by an unspeakable transmutation, into the will of God.

Devotion, says S. Francis de Sales, is zeal added to love.

A story of a great and heroic pilgrimage is that of the little band of Africans who brought Livingstone's body back from the heart of the African jungle to Zanzibar. Most of the band were recently-freed slaves ; they had no leader, save that they appointed two of their number to be chiefs of the expedition. They buried the great explorer's heart beneath a tree, and started on—and accomplished triumphantly—that long and sorrowful journey, upborne only by their love and loyalty to that master whose whole life was a call to the heroic in man.

S. Francis de Sales counsels those under his direction to begin each day with spiritual exer-

cises, and to gather therefrom what he calls ' a little nosegay of devotion ' to carry throughout the day. He explains his meaning in this way : ' One who has been walking in a beautiful garden does not willingly go away without gathering four or five flowers to keep and smell the whole day after, so when our spirit has been expatiating in some mystery of divine grace, we ought to select one or two or three points which we have found most pleasant, and which are most proper for our advancement, to think frequently upon them, and to smell them as it were spiritually for the rest of the day.'

When S. Columba and his twelve companions, inspired by missionary zeal, set sail from Derry in the year 563 for the west coast of Scotland, they left their country with much sorrow, and it is related that they landed first on an island from which they could still see the beloved Irish coast. ' We must not make our abode here,' they said one to another, ' lest, with our fatherland always in sight, we should be tempted to go back, and the work which God has given us to do be left undone.' So they set sail again, and came at length to the ocean-swept isle of Iona.

FAILURE

I FOUND myself by accident in the studio of a Chelsea sculptor (says Mr. Stanley Baldwin), and when there I saw an exquisitely beautiful statue of a young shepherd, the original of the figure which now stands in a mountain village in Merionethshire—the figure of a poet who fell in the Great War. You have all heard the story of this private soldier in the trenches who had written a poem for the great festival at Birkenhead, and how he was killed on Pilkem Bridge before he received the crown that would have been given to him.

That poet has again proved the truth of the old saying that 'The Celt goes forth to battle and has always fallen'; but there is the additional truth that there are some defeats which mean more than victories, and which are in themselves victories everlasting.

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master ;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim ;

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same—
. . . You'll be a man, my son.

Rudyard Kipling.

'Born a man, and died a grocer,' runs an old epitaph. A successful grocer, maybe. But what tragedy that all the powers of manhood should have been levelled down to that one ambition.

FAITHFULNESS

Every one will know the famous picture ' Faithful unto Death ' by Sir E. J. Poynter. It represents a young Roman soldier standing on guard at the gate, during the destruction of Herculaneum. He is faithful to duty, and though the walls are falling round him, and death is certain, he will not forsake his post.

Father Frank George tells a story of a native boy in one of the mission schools in Africa who desired to become a Christian. His parents said to him, ' You can be a Christian if you like, but if you do, there will be an end of you when you come home.' The boy made his decision, and was baptized. He stayed with the mission until his schooling was over, and then went home. The threat came true, for the boy was never heard of again. He was doubtless poisoned by the witch doctor. He was willing to die rather than fail in loyalty to our Lord.

The story of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste is familiar to many.

Forty soldiers who were Christians were condemned to stand on a frozen pool until they should renounce their faith. On the banks in the distance glowed the light of the great fires, tempting them back to warmth and safety. And through the bitter blasts of the night they prayed, 'O Lord Jesu, forty soldiers have come out to fight for Thee; grant that forty soldiers may receive the crown.'

At length, overcome by that attractive glow in the distance, and by the bitter suffering of frozen hands and feet, one gave in. He called for deliverance, and was rescued and taken off to the hot baths and the fire. Yet still the thirty-nine remaining prayed again and again the same prayer, and at length, towards morning, the soldier who was placed in charge of them came out to take the place of the one who had proved faithless.

Still they prayed on, 'O Lord Jesu, forty soldiers have come forth to fight for Thee; grant that forty soldiers may receive the crown.' And at length forty martyrs lay lifeless upon that frozen pool.

The life of John Wesley was that of a true apostle, set only on gathering souls to the fold of the true Shepherd. It led him through many hardships, travelling, it is estimated, not less than 225,000 miles, and preaching under all conditions, difficulties, and discomforts. 'No

wonder the devil does not like field preaching,' said Wesley, once talking about it. 'No more do I. I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, but where is my zeal if I do not trample these under foot to save one soul? Leisure and I have taken leave of each other. I propose to be busy as long as I live.'

FATHERHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD

In his book *The Light Invisible*, Father Hugh Benson tells the story of a child who loses his mother at the age of seven. He is a peculiarly sensitive boy, and will let no one know of the agony of his loss, and his loneliness. But night after night he wakes up in his nursery, and tries to imagine that his beloved mother is coming, as she always used to do, to bid him good night. Then he would turn and sob himself to sleep with disappointment and longing.

But one night, when he is more than particularly unhappy, the nursery door opens, and she comes, as she had been used to do, dressed for an evening party. She lifts him from his bed and holds him in her arms until, soothed and comforted, he sleeps, to wake again in the morning in his own little bed, happy and calm again. And after then she comes again and again on those occasions when he is feeling more than usually lonely and unhappy.

On the last night when the child was given such a vision of solace, he awoke when the morn was breaking, and the birds twittering outside. Instead of waking in his bed as usual, he found himself still in his mother's gentle arms. It was a great joy to find her there, and

he looked up lovingly into that dear face—to find that it was not his mother, but the face of Mary, the great Mother of God, who looked down on him with eyes of the most loving and tender motherhood.

Years ago, a child had been stolen from its home, and the father left home and wandered all up and down the country, seeking for his boy. 'So long as I live,' said he, 'I shall continue to search throughout the land, looking in the face of every boy I meet, until I find my own lost child.'

Sir James Barrie speaks of one of his unfinished plays :

'The scene is a school, schoolmasters present, but if you like you could make it a university, professors present. They are discussing an illuminated scroll about a student fallen in the war, which they have kindly presented to his parents, and unexpectedly the parents enter.

'They are an old pair, backbent; they have been stalwarts in their day but have now gone small ; they are poor, but not so poor that they could not send their boy to college. They are in black, not such a rusty black either, and you may be sure she is the one who knows what to do with his hat. . . .

'They have come to thank the Senatus for their lovely scroll and to ask them to tear it

up. At first they had been enamoured to read of what a scholar their son was, and how noble and adored by all. But soon a fog settled over them, for this grand person was not the boy they knew. He had many a fault well known to them ; he was not always so noble ; as a scholar he did no more than scrape through ; and he sometimes made his father rage and his mother grieve. They had liked to talk such memories as these together, as if they were bits of him he had left lying about the house. So thank you kindly, and would you please give them back their boy by tearing up the scroll ? '

A war correspondent writes of a Belgian mother who tramped across Belgium with her children. For a hundred and forty miles she carried her baby, seeking in vain for a place of rest. For days she never slept under a roof nor ate a full meal, but at length she reached Ostend and safety. She looked haggard and weary, but the baby was crowing lustily. One could not but wonder at the wonderful sacrifices the mother had made to shield the little life.

On the heights of Sedan, while the battle was in progress, stood a group of men watching the struggling armies in the plain below. In this group was the American general, Sheridan, who watched with the keen eye of a soldier. King

William was also there, but his interest was different from the general's, for his son was in the thick of the fight, and he watched the battle with the eye of a father as well as of a king.

A parent does not want his children's duty. He wants their love. He wants them to feel that they are in their own home. It makes all the difference ; it changes the atmosphere of the house.

Christians should be like that in God's house, in the great world in which He has put us. We should have the atmosphere about us that children have when they come rushing in to their meals. The Person Who owns the house is not merely our Friend, but our Father. We can move freely about in our own home.

Sir J. M. Barrie, writing in *Margaret Ogilvie*, says :

'When you looked into my mother's eyes you knew, as if He had told you, why God sent her into the world. It was to open the minds of all who looked to beautiful thoughts.'

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine !
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine !

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine !
I know whose tears would come down to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine !

Rudyard Kipling.

THE CONQUEST OF FEAR

It is said that all men have their peculiar fears. In the case of Francis of Assisi it was a deep-seated horror of leprosy, and it is significant that the conquest of that fear should have broken down the barrier to his new life. The story is perhaps best told in the words of Mr. G. K. Chesterton :

'He was riding listlessly in some wayside place, apparently in the open country, when he saw a figure coming along the road to him and halted, for he saw it was a leper. And he knew instantly that his courage was challenged, not as the world challenges, but as one would challenge who knew the secrets of the heart of a man. What he saw advancing was not the banner and spears of Perugia, from which it never occurred to him to shrink ; not the armies that fought for the crown of Sicily, of which he had always thought as a courageous man thinks of mere vulgar danger. Francis Bernardone saw his fear coming up the road towards him ; the fear that comes from within and not without ; though it stood white and horrible in the sunlight. For once in the long rush of his life his soul must have stood still. Then he sprang from his horse, knowing nothing between still-

ness and swiftness, and rushed on the leper and threw his arms round him.

'It was the beginning of a long vocation of ministry among many lepers, for whom he did many services; to this man he gave what money he could and mounted and rode on. We do not know how far he rode, or with what sense of the things around him; but it is said that when he looked back, he could see no figure on the road.'

A traveller describes his crossing of a narrow bridge over a high ravine, and his terror on looking down on to the abyss beneath. Halfway across this terror seized him. Yet he went on with his heart in his mouth, resolutely, yet half mechanically, putting one foot before the other from plank to plank. He passed the centre of the bridge—he reached the three-quarters. Then his heart failed him, the horror of a great height held him fast. He breathed a prayer and went on, his very panic driving him. Then he saw that the bank below was nearer the bridge than it had been. The other side and safety were at hand, and he stumbled along those last few feet till he could breathe safely on the solid land, and look back with relief over that perilous passage.

Sadhu Sundar Singh tells how one day he was bathing in the sea, when a tremendous

wave swept towards him like a wall. Full of fear he prayed. But what happened was that the wave which he feared took him safely ashore.

There is a story of a Red Indian boy whose father wished to teach him courage. He took him to the woods and tied him to a tree and left him there all night. The boy feared that the wild beasts might attack him and cried out in alarm, but there was no reply. But the father had not left his son. Gun in hand, he was watching behind a tree, ready to defend him from any wild animal which might approach to attack him.

Sadhu Sundar Singh.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

If Christians would but realize the universal brotherhood of the Church of Christ, the kingdom of God would be hastened.

Mohammedanism is a world-wide brotherhood. If you ask an African from one of the country districts, says a traveller, 'Who are you?' he will not give the name of his country, or of his tribe; he will say, 'I am a Mohammedan.'

A traveller arrived at a small borderland village very late at night. He went from house to house endeavouring to find a night's lodging, but found each in darkness, and no one could be persuaded to give him hospitality. At length he knocked at a small house in despair, and when a head finally appeared at the bedroom window above, asked for lodging, but it was refused. 'Aren't there any Christians in this place?' he asked, desperately. 'No, sir,' was the reply, 'we're all Johnsons and Jardines.'

If I have a message for you and the people of this country, it is just this. I would say:

'England! Steady! Look where you are going! Human hands were given us to clasp, and not to be raised against one another in fratricidal strife.'

Stanley Baldwin.

A couple of generations ago, *Punch* had a drawing of a charming lady showing her house to a benevolent old gentleman. 'This,' she says, showing the attic, 'is where the housemaid sleeps.' 'Dear me,' says he, 'isn't it very damp? I see the water glistening on the walls.' 'Oh, no,' is the reply, 'it's not too damp for a servant.'

The many make the household,
But only One the Home.

J. R. Lowell.

It may be that the unattractive presentation of the religion of Jesus Christ deserved the indictment of a novelist of a generation or so ago.

A girl who was in disgrace is depicted as discussing with a friend what she should do to find shelter and help for herself and her child. She had, she said, an aunt, but she could not go to her, she was so very religious. And she could not bear the thought of living with the sort of people who would think nothing of

evil. She was in despair. 'I should go to your aunt, I think,' advised the friend. 'Some of these Christians aren't quite so hard as they're always supposed to be.'

A traveller on the Alps tells of his experience as alone he made his journey down one of the great mountains. The great Alps stretched around him, overwhelming in their frozen vastness. He looked around—there was no sound, no movement, no tree nor blade of grass, nor even the wing of a bird—nothing but that immensity, and fear fell on him. A sheer mile below him, lying as it were in the floor of the hollow, lay a little lake. He started to descend, slowly and warily, using his staff to bear his weight, those five thousand feet. But he was still overcome by fear and did not dare to look down that sheer depth. But presently, when he had made some progress, he sat down on a slab and looked down, and there, below, was the lake, and he could see a little steamer on the lake. There, he knew, were human kind, human companionship, and his fear left him, and he took heart again.

THE GIFT ON THE ALTAR

'Q' TELLS a good Cornish story of a priest whose church is destroyed. Undismayed, he sets about rebuilding it with his own hands, aided by his young son, Taffy. Mr. Raymond is by nature a scholar and is not much of a carpenter, but the boy has learned some rudiments of building and has a natural deftness with tools, and together the two make some little progress with the building, working at night.

It is then that Jacky Pascoe, the local preacher, comes to their assistance. 'I've been spying in upon 'ee these nights past, Parson dear,' says he. 'Pretty carpenters you be! T'other night, as I was a-peeping, the Lord said to me, "Arise, go, and for goodness' sake show them chaps how to do it fitty." "Dear Lord," I said, "Thou knowest I be a Bryanite." The Lord said to me, "None of your back answers! Go and do as I tell 'ee." So here I be.'

The work progresses more quickly with such practical assistance, and Pascoe is astonished with the natural gift of carpentry possessed by the boy Taffy. 'I doubt,' says Pascoe, 'if you'll ever make so good a man as your father, but you can't help making a better workman.

There 's one thing in which you might copy 'en. He hasn't much of a gift, but he lays it upon the altar.'

To dedicate oneself to God is half the joy of heaven. We imagine that we give ourselves to God, but in reality it is God Who gives Himself to us.

L'Abbé Gustave Morel.

Mr. Robert Hichens, in his *Garden of Allah*, draws a picture of an Englishwoman, Domini Enfilden, who journeys to Africa. She awakes at Beni Mora in the early morning, with the desert air breathing freshness and cleanliness. She had long been weary of soul, and there springs to her lips a spontaneous prayer for spiritual cleanliness and renewal, ' O God, renew me, renew me.'

Domini finds the answer to her prayer in those desert spaces in the deepening of her faith. She finds it, too, in her growing love for the man who finally becomes her husband. And when, in that most tragic moment, she discovers that he is the Trappist monk who has broken his vows, she reaches that highest love which can sacrifice its own happiness for the good of its beloved. She could send him bravely back to his duty to God, and face the world alone.

' Love watcheth, and sleeping, slumbereth

not. . . . Like a vivid flame and a burning torch it mounteth upwards and securely passeth through all.' 'It securely passeth through all.' Domini had found the renewal for which she prayed.

In Dr. Maynard Smith's Life of the late Bishop of Zanzibar, the story is told of the influence which Mr. Gilkes had on Frank when a boy at school. 'Weston,' he asked one day, 'if Jesus Christ asked you for the loan of a coat, would you fetch Him your shabbiest?' The answer was No, but the question was always remembered.

He found in time that the Lord Jesus did not merely ask for his coat, but for all that he had and was, and his whole life was an endeavour to render the gift complete.

GOD THE CREATOR

A Roman emperor said one day to Rabbi Joshua, 'Show me your God.' 'Raise your eyes to the sky,' replied the Rabbi, 'God is there.' The emperor looked up into the firmament, but the sun shone down so dazzlingly, that he was obliged to cast his eyes downwards. 'What,' said the Rabbi, 'wouldst thou see the Master, when thou hast not power to look His creature in the face?'

On the grave of W. H. Hudson are the words: He loved birds, and green places, and the wind upon the heath, and saw the brightness of the skirts of God.

It is said of Tom Sebright that he loved his hounds with a love that must have made their Creator smile with satisfaction. Every year's puppies were 'just the most beautiful I ever had.'

If, says Emerson, the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would man be-

lieve and adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown ?

The story is told of an old countrywoman who had lived all her life in her cottage. She became seriously ill, and an attempt was made to persuade her to go to the nearest hospital for nursing that she might have a better chance of recovery. But the old woman turned herself on her elbow and pointing through the window, said, ' For sixty years I have watched the sun set behind that tree. Do you think I can afford to lose one sunset ? '

THE HEALING TOUCH

A MAN visited a jeweller's store to inspect certain precious stones. Among other gems he was shown an opal, which, as it lay there, looked dull and altogether lustreless. But the jeweller took the stone in his hand and held it for some moments. Then he showed it again to his visitor. It gleamed and flashed with all the colours of the rainbow. There are many lives everywhere which are rich in their possibilities of beauty. They seem dull and lustreless, they are perhaps stained with sin. They need the healing touch of the Hand of Jesus to bring out the radiance of the Divine Image hidden within.

HEAVEN

All the way to heaven is heaven.

Throngs of people were entering in at a gate at which, tradition has it, stood S. Peter. Among them was a man who was entering when S. Peter barred the way, saying, 'We know you not. You cannot enter here!' 'But,' cried he, 'you must know me. My wife has been a regular churchgoer all her life.' 'We know your wife,' said the saint, 'but we do not know you here.' 'There must be some mistake,' cried the man, astonished, 'I have always been most particular to send my children to Sunday school regularly. They have always brought home prizes.' 'Yes,' was the reply. 'We know your children, but we do not know you. You cannot enter here.'

The children at Cowley were being catechized about heaven. One boy answered with confidence, 'We shall go there when we die if we are good.' It was a safe answer, but it did not seem to satisfy the questioner. 'Is that all you know of heaven?' he asked. And another eager answer came, 'No, we are there already.'

HUMILITY

Anton Mauve (says Mr. E. V. Lucas), like all the greatest painters, took what he found around him and made it beautiful. He was one of the artists of whom the Creator must be most proud, in whom He must take most delight, for his whole life was given up to the demonstration of how beautiful everything is—and never with the faintest whisper of the words : 'and how skilful am I!'

Heaven is very high ; but the gate to it is very low.

An Indian sweeper who was a Christian used to attract great crowds as he preached the Gospel. One day a passer-by said scornfully : 'Why do people gather so respectfully to listen to a sweeper?' 'When the Saviour was riding to Jerusalem on an ass,' replied the man, 'people spread their garments beneath the feet of the ass. Not for the ass's sake, but because the Kings of kings was riding on it. When Christ got down from the ass, nobody cared any more about it. It was honoured just so long as the King of kings was using it.'

Sadhu Sundar Singh.

John Wesley was of an imperious nature, born to rule, but he also had a cultivated habit of gentleness, which often prevailed where no authority could. He once fell out with Bradford, a travelling companion, who refused him a small service. They parted for the night and slept over the matter. In the morning they met again. 'Well, must we part?' said Wesley. 'Please yourself,' said Bradford. 'Will you ask my pardon?' said Wesley. 'No, sir,' was the reply. 'Then I will ask yours,' said Wesley. And Bradford succumbed, and became his most devoted friend.

It is strange to remark that whilst the lives written of S. Patrick are full of stories of miracles, the saint himself records none of them in his *Confession*. Perhaps the real reason is, that his whole life seemed to him a transcendent miracle. That God had chosen just him out of so many—him the sinner, the unlearned, the least of all—to do so great a work as the conversion of the Irish, filled his soul with amazement. As he says in his *Breastplate* :

> God's virtue to pilot me,
> God's might to uphold me,
> God's wisdom to guide me.

The sense of the divine love which encompassed him and which shaped his ends made life for S. Patrick a perpetual miracle.

It is said that the waters of Saharan rivers burrow so as not to be dried up by the sun. Thy cross the deserts through tunnels, and only come to light at the entrance of the palm plantation.

René Bazin, in his life of Père Charles de Foucauld, speaks of the missionary's humility. As a hermit in the Sahara, de Foucauld longed for a settlement of White Sisters or of Brothers to help him in his work. But they did not come ; save for a very short time, he was never to have a companion. 'I am still alone,' he wrote in his wonderful humility. 'I am not faithful enough for Jesus to give me a companion.'

This humility was the secret of his influence over Christians and infidels alike. It had nothing to do with timidity, for his plans and ambitions for God's glory were of the greatest boldness. A poor priest, lost in the oasis of the Sahara, says his biographer, he proposed to build more institutions than a monastery full of heroes of charity could maintain. He allowed himself to be carried away far beyond the palm trees of Beni-Abbes. He wished for, and aimed at, the conversion of the whole of Africa, of the entire world. He was not therefore a madman, but a very humble man, who knew the power of God.

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

Francis Thompson, one of the greatest of modern poets, was once wandering along the Thames Embankment, cold and ragged. He had been trying to sell matches ; he had been trying to call cabs, but nobody seemed to want either. Here he was wandering, ragged, starving—yet, looking along the dark waters of the Thames, he felt, ' Even here is Jesus Christ ! ' The thought is embodied in his beautiful poem:

> The angels keep their ancient places ;
> Turn but a stone, and start a wing !
> 'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
> That miss the many-splendoured thing.
>
> But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
> Cry ; and upon thy so sore loss
> Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
> Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross
>
> Yea, in the night, my soul, my daughter,
> Cry—clinging Heaven by the hems ;
> And lo, Christ walking on the water
> Not of Gennesareth, but Thames !

God is everywhere, but unless you find Him somewhere you will find Him nowhere.

The Rev. Paul Bull.

The American writer, David Grayson, writes in his *Adventures in Contentment* of an old professor he meets. 'I have been a botanist for fifty-four years,' says the old man. 'When I was a boy I believed implicitly in God. I prayed to Him, having a vision of Him—a Person—before my eyes. As I grew older I concluded that there was no God. I dismissed Him from the universe. I believed only in what I could see, or hear, or feel. I talked about Nature and reality.' He paused, the smile still lighting his face, evidently recalling to himself the old days. Finally he turned and said abruptly: 'And now, it seems to me, there is nothing but God.'

INCENSE

Of all our rites (says the Rev. J. F. Briscoe) there is scarcely one more touching or significant than the use of incense. Here is the flame, hot and piercing. Here are the incense grains, brought from so far, chosen so carefully, so precious, so delicate, yet crushed and broken, and they are waiting to be burnt. Incense is only sweet when it has felt the fire. It is useless in its box or on dead charcoal. It is only when the charcoal is alight that the sanctuary is filled with fragrance. There is nothing fruitful but sacrifice. It is only when we have felt the fire of sacrifice that the sanctuary is sweet.

INDIVIDUALITY

Each of us is meant to be what S. Francis of Assisi has been called, a 'Mirror of Christ.' But we are not called to be mirrors of one another. The gift of individuality is one of the greatest of God's gifts, and we only become what God has created us to be by the imitation of Christ, the sum of all perfection.

There are people who lose their individuality by a foolish imitation of others, copying their habits, their manners, and their style of conversation. The result is much the same as the composite photograph which the amateur photographer knows so well—the fruit of having taken two photographs on the same plate. It is a failure.

God has not made us all of one pattern. His Church has need of men and women of all types, and of varying characteristics. In the roof of the beautiful church of S. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, there are said to be no fewer than seven hundred bosses, no two of which are alike. It is to this very diversity that the roof owes its beauty.

INFLUENCE

It was a strange scene in the history of Florence in the days of Savonarola, when having rid the city of its tyrant, he called together the citizens, and in solemn conclave they elected Christ King of Florence. Of eleven hundred citizens who voted, it is reported that only eighteen dropped the white bean of dissent into the voting urn. The sacred monogram was engraved over the door of the palace, a government was formed on a basis of perfect freedom. Only such duties and taxes as were right were asked for, and all wrong things were to be put away. Forgiveness took the place of faction, religion of ambition, the very street boys sang the Frate's songs to their merry tunes. It was the influence of one sincere and enthusiastic man, a man of God. It was the voice and the influence of Girolamo Savonarola.

S. Augustine tells of how he came under the influence of S. Ambrose, attracted at first by his oratory and by some special friendliness which he had shown. I began to love him, he says, not at first as a teacher of the truth, which I despaired of finding in Thy Church, but as a

fellow creature who was kind to me. I listened attentively to his sermons, not with the right attitude of mind, but criticizing his eloquence, whether it was equal to his reputation, or whether its stream was broader or narrower than men reported. Thus I hung eagerly on his expressions, while as regards the subject I remained a cool or contemptuous looker-on, delighted only with the charm of his style. . . . Yet with the phrases which I loved, the facts which I neglected began to trickle into my mind, for I could not keep them apart. And while I opened my heart to welcome the eloquence of his speech, I began, though only step by step, to feel the truth of it.

I remember many years ago standing on the terrace of a beautiful villa near Florence (says Mr. Stanley Baldwin). It was a September evening, and the valley below was transfigured in the long horizontal rays of the declining sun. And then I heard a bell, such a bell as never was on land or sea, a bell whose every vibration found an echo in my innermost heart. I said to my hostess, 'That is the most beautiful bell I have ever heard.' 'Yes,' she replied, 'it is an English bell.' And so it was. For generations its sound had gone out over English fields, giving the hours of work and prayer to English folk from the tower of an English abbey, and then came the Reformation, and

some wise Italian bought the bell whose work at home was done, and sent it to the Valley of the Arno, where after four centuries it stirred the heart of a wandering Englishman and made him sick for home.

Dr. Arnold of Rugby had a way of taking a boy's word and of trusting him, which put them to shame. 'If you say so, that is enough,' he would say, refusing further proof of any assertion, 'of course I believe your word.' There grew up in consequence a feeling that it was a shame to tell Arnold a lie—'he always believes you.'

He had the highest ideals for the school, and this was one source of his immense influence. 'It is not necessary,' he said on one occasion when it had become necessary to send away some boys, 'that this should be a school of three hundred or one hundred and fifty boys, but it *is* necessary that it should be a school of Christian gentlemen.'

The most potent influence in the world to-day is the silent living influence of a consecrated life. There is a story of a French priest who used to preach before Louis XIV. The king once said to him: 'When you preach I tremble; when I see how you live I am reassured.'

Fénelon exercised a great influence over his little pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, grandson of Louis XIV. The little duke was a child of the strongest passions, liable to fly into the wildest rage at anything which thwarted him, haughty and proud. He would brook no opposition, and it is related of him that he would break the very clocks when they struck the hour which summoned him to an unwelcome duty. Fénelon gained his affections, dealt with his faults wisely, refusing to tolerate them, making him see how they lowered him. 'Kings,' said he in one of the *Dialogues* he wrote for the instruction of his pupil, 'who wish to be well spoken of have only one resource, to act well.'

Again and again the boy slipped back into his passionate fits, and again and again he promised to amend, till he conquered his faults; and under the wise and quiet religious training of Fénelon the duke became a worthy heir to the throne. He never failed in his affection to Fénelon. 'I know what I owe to you, and you know what I am to you,' said he on meeting him many years afterwards.

JOY

Joy is so beautiful because it is always spontaneous, a breaking-forth of what cannot be repressed. 'The rivers of the flood therefore shall make glad the city of God.' Joy is like the breaking forth of the fountain ; joy is like the swinging of the river in the sunshine. Joy is the barometer of love, because it is the test of our love for God.

Take Joy home,
And make in thy great heart a place for her,
And give her time to grow, and cherish her !
It is a comely fashion to be glad.
Joy is the grace we say to God.

Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.

Sir J. M. Barrie.

There is no happiness like that of being loved by your fellow creatures, and feeling that your presence is an addition to their comfort.

Charlotte Bronte.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

'I'll tell 'ee a prabble,' says the local Cornish preacher in one of 'Q's' books, 'a prabble about this candle I'm holding. When God Almighty said "Let there be light" He gave every man a candle—to some folks, same as you, long sixes perhaps and best wax; to others, a farthing dip. But they all helps to light up; and the beauty of it is, there isn't one of them burns a ha'porth the worse for every candle that 's lit from them.'

'I've never set foot inside the church, but it cuts me that that light 's put out. And if money 's the trouble, I've come to offer my bit to start it again.'

It was a stout and unromantic policeman, a solid Wesleyan, who spoke. The sanctuary lamp, which had been kept burning night and day for a score of years, had been extinguished whilst the church was being restored.

'Isn't it my business?' he went on. 'You can't tell the harm it's going to do, putting it out. Time after time of a night has my beat taken me round that church, and whenever I could see the windows there was its light burn-

ing, burning away, quiet and strong and hopeful like. When the rain 's been beating, I've stood still on a stormy night and told myself, "That 's like the Lamp of the Gospel, shining out, beckoning you to be strong." I've been by when the stars were bright and the streets were full of noise and people, and it seemed to be pleading for them to give a look and think why it was there. I've hunted for it in the fog and had to go close up to see it, and I've thought of myself groping away for the Saviour when it was all dark.

'And once, on as sharp a winter's night as ever I'll live to see, I remember one of those poor women coming up to me. "Take me to the station," she said, "or I'll do it." She meant drowning herself, but somehow she caught sight of the little light, and it seemed to say, "Don't! The Hope of the old, old story isn't out for you yet." I've told many rough chaps about it, and you'll hardly believe, but they never laughed.'

And I thought of how Peggotty, in *David Copperfield*, opened the door and put a lighted candle in the window, so that it should be a welcome to little Em'ly when she came home.

In one of 'Q's' books, a priest and his son are pictured as on holiday at Tewkesbury, and looking up at the old abbey church, the boy asked his father about it. He was told of the battlements, of the meadow below where the

great battle had been fought, of soldiers at bay with their backs to the abbey wall, of crowds who had run for refuge into the church.

'See it now,' said the priest, looking up at the old tower, 'with the light upon it. And it has seen it all. Eight hundred years of heaven's storms and man's madness, and still foursquare and as beautiful now as when the old masons took down their scaffolding.' He broke off suddenly. 'Lord, make men as towers,' he added quietly after a while.

It was a strange prayer and remained in the boy's memory—as did the picture of the great tower. It was some time afterwards when his father added another saying to it. 'All towers carry a lamp of some kind. For what else are they built?'

On the south of the Thames lie the furnaces which supply London offices with electricity. Whenever a fog seems likely to arise, a man is sent to the top of the huge chimney belonging to these furnaces on the look-out. He has to look down the river for the first signs of the fog rolling up, and call a warning. Then the furnaces are stoked again, so that extra light is obtained to combat the coming darkness. Every danger, every difficulty should be for the Church a call to fresh prayer and further effort—the re-stoking of her fires to meet the danger.

LITTLE TROUBLES

We ought to learn how sometimes to go boldly *through* our troubles, and at other times to go alongside of them. A man who is travelling through a snowstorm does not stop to count the flakes ; he pushes on as steadily as he can, and though the journey may be wearisome, sooner or later he comes to the end of it.

John Wesley was walking one day with a zealous companion who was in great trouble, and did not know what to do. The two passed a stone wall, over which a cow was looking. 'Do you know,' said Wesley, 'why the cow looks over the wall ? It is because she cannot look through it. It is what we must do with our troubles, look over and above them.'

We should make of our troubles a bridge to take us to God ; not a wall to keep us from Him.

OUR LORD

In his novel *An Average Man*, Father Hugh Benson writes, in describing the young man's first grasp of the faith of Jesus Christ :

'This new Person had qualities he had not previously dreamed of. He was no longer the pained meek person he had thought Him. He was huge and virile and infinitely tender. He was everything that was worth anything. He was the Heart of all colour, the Melody of all music, the Perfection of all shape, the Essence of all sweetness. . . . Another name for Him was the Love of God.'

Father Vernon opened his sermon which was broadcast recently by the story of a little girl who was drawing very seriously. 'What are you doing, darling ?' asked her mother. 'I'm drawing, Mummy.' 'What are you drawing, then ?' 'I'm drawing God,' she answered. 'But, my darling, you can't draw God. No one can do that. No one knows what He is like.' 'But they *will* know, Mummy, when I've finished my picture !' said the child.

It is for every Christian to reproduce Christ

in his life if we would have the world know what He is like.

We should read the Gospels as the story of Him Whom we worship. 'As I read,' says Dr. Dale, 'I forget Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I see Christ face to face. I hear His voice. I am filled with wonder and joy.'

Every one knows the story of S. Martin, who when a soldier, and a catechumen, rode one day by the city gate and saw a naked soldier who asked for alms. Martin cut his cloak in two and gave half to the beggar. His companions jeered at him, but that night Martin had a vision of our Lord surrounded by His angels, and wearing the half of the cloak. 'This,' said He to the angel host, 'is the cloak which Martin gave Me.'

Many years later, when Martin had become Bishop of Tours, he had another vision. It was the devil who appeared to him in the form of Christ with a golden crown on his head, and magnificently apparelled. 'I am come in judgement, adore me,' said the vision. 'But where are the marks of the nails? Where is the spear wound, where the crown of thorns?' replied Martin. 'When I see the marks of the Passion, I will adore my Lord!'

When I look back, said Shackleton after one of his journeys, I have no doubt that Providence guided us, not only across those snowfields, but across the storm-white sea.

I know that during that long and racking march of thirty-six hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it seemed to me often that we were four, not three. I said nothing to my companions, but afterwards Worsley said to me, 'Boss, I had a curious feeling on that march that there was another Person with us.'

A mission priest in Africa tells of a time when, in the heart of the Drakensberg, he was doubtful as to the wisdom of baptizing an old man, who appeared to know very little of the Faith, and would say less, but who desired to be made a Christian. In despair, the priest took out his crucifix and held it before the old warrior. 'Who is This?' he asked. The old savage in his tattered skins and dirty loincloth, crippled with rheumatism, got slowly to his feet without a word, and raised his hand above his head. 'Bayete!' he quavered, and gave the Poor Man of Nazareth the Zulu royal salute.

In the old carol of 'Good King Wenceslaus,' as the page plants his feet in the footprints of the saint there thrills through him a glow of

warmth and life. As the Christian puts his feet in the marks made by his Master before him—the path of renunciation and love and suffering—he feels the thrill of warmth and life throbbing in his own veins.

Every schoolboy knows the tale of how Peter the Great left his throne and in lowly disguise apprenticed himself at Zaandam and Amsterdam as a shipwright. Among the common labourers he wrought, dressed in their working garb, living in a hut, preparing his own food, making his own bed. Yet he never ceased to be the Emperor of Russia. His royal splendour was but laid aside for a time.

Père Lacordaire once preached a great sermon on 'Jesus in History.' When we die we are soon forgotten, but Lacordaire says that there is One Who lived two thousand years ago, yet His tomb is still wet with tears. In every land are those who cry out to Him and who love Him still. That is the incomparable glory of Jesus Christ—to be always remembered and always loved.

The heart of the Christian religion is personal loyalty to Jesus Christ.

The length to which the love of Christ will go is shown in the washing of the feet of Judas

Iscariot. Tradition has it that our Lord came to Judas last of all. And why? To give Judas a chance. There he sat, the arch-traitor with the blood-money on his person, and our Blessed Lord went down upon His sacred knees and played the part of the slave, and all to give Judas a chance!

It is said of the Sadhu Sundar Singh that coming from his presence men forget themselves, and forget him. But they think of Jesus Christ.

Many years ago a Moravian missionary went to preach the Gospel to the slaves in the West Indies. But as a free man he could not reach them, so he became a slave himself, and went with them to their toils in the fields and into all their hardships and suffering, thus getting close to them. Then they listened to him.

It is recorded that Retsch, the sculptor, spent eight years of his life in designing a wonderful statue of Jesus Christ. It was his dream by night, it filled his thoughts by day. Then he made a clay model, with none of the usual emblematical marks on the Figure—no halo, no cross, no crown, nothing by which to identify it. He showed the model to a six-year-old

child, and he cried out, ' It's Jesus ! ' It was a wonderful triumph of art.

During the years in which General Gordon lived at Gravesend he devoted all his time to work among the poor, particularly the ragged street boys. He commenced evening classes for them, and presided over them himself, calling the boys his ' kings.' He obtained berths for many of them on ships, and kept in his sitting-room a large chart of the world with pins stuck in it showing the probable position of the ships in which his ' kings ' were sailing. So he followed them in thought and affection wherever they went.

MEDITATION

In Rome there is a picture gallery, which contains many great treasures of art. Morning after morning it is the custom for young art-students to go and copy these pictures. You will see them dotted about the gallery, here and there, copying the great treasures. But there is one priceless treasure with never a student before it. It is a picture—a wonderful portrait—which, for some reason or other, is never allowed to be painted.

But there was once a student, more enterprising than the rest, who was absolutely determined to paint that picture, even though he could not bring his paint-box or his easel near it. So day after day he went and stood beneath the portrait, and gazed and gazed upon it, noting every line of the features, every fold of the dress, every detail of the setting. Then he went away and put down on the canvas what he had seen. And at last, after infinite care, he succeeded in reproducing the picture with wonderful faithfulness.

We have to reproduce, not a picture, but a living Person, no less than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We have to gaze and gaze upon Him until in some measure we become

like Him. How can we do that better than in meditation ?

It was once said to a priest : ' When you find yourself away from other people's souls and are alone with God, you are just *bored*.' Retreat is a test.

A priest in retreat once said : ' I have never given God a chance of speaking to me.' He had never made his meditation.

There is the story of the old French workman who used to spend long hours kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament. ' What is it,' they asked him, ' what is it that you say to our Lord as you kneel there for so long ?' ' I look at Him, and He looks at me,' was the reply. That is meditation.

A little child ill in hospital used to lie often, for a very long time, quite still and silent, with hands folded. ' Do you spend those times when you are quiet praying to our Lord ? ' asked the sister who was tending her. ' No, sister, I wasn't praying. I was just loving Him.' That again is meditation.

A man sitting by the bank of a river noticed some fish which from time to time came up to the surface and opened their mouths wide. On

inquiry he discovered that these fish could only breathe to a certain extent under water, and had to rise to the surface occasionally for air. In the same way Christians need to rise above the things of earth and breathe the air of heaven, in prayer and worship and meditation.

Sadhu Sundar Singh.

Prayer is the wing wherewith the soul flies to heaven ; meditation the eye with which we see God.

S. Ambrose.

PEACE

Peace must be found at all costs, or we die—peace with God, inward peace.

Dante, wandering over the mountains of Spezia, came one evening to the monastery of Santa Croce, amid the grey-green olives of Italy. At the portal he knocked. A brother opened to him and asked, 'What wouldest thou?' And upon him there flashed Dante's deep hungering eyes, that intense gaze that was used to searching into the far-away, that face which, when once we have seen it, though only on a faded fresco, we can never forget again. 'What wouldest thou?' said the brother. And Dante answered, 'I am ever restless. I want peace, God's peace.'

The human heart can find no lasting satisfaction in the things of this world alone. It must find something better than these, or perish.

There is said to be a strange plant in South America which finds a moist place, and sends its roots down and becomes green for a little while, until the place becomes dry, when it draws itself out and rolls up, and is blown along by the wind until it comes to another moist

spot, where it repeats the same process. On and on the plant goes, stopping wherever it finds a little water, until the spot is dry. Then in the end, after all its wanderings, it is nothing but a bundle of dry roots and leaves.

At the end of the last war between France and Great Britain there were a number of French ships which had been out for some years. They did not know that peace had been proclaimed in their absence, and they wanted to get back to their own country without meeting any British men-of-war. A gale scattered them, and one vessel was carried away from the others, and when the morning broke she found herself opposite the coast of England, with a British war vessel lying close-by. The French captain was greatly perplexed and in terror. His first thought was to sink his ship rather than to allow her to fall into the enemy's hands. But then his ship was hailed by the man-of-war, and he learned that peace had been proclaimed between the two countries. So he knew that his ship was safe and his fear vanished.

Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our heart is restless till it finds rest in Thee.

S. Augustine.

PENITENCE

God's forgiveness does not so much depend upon His power or desire to forgive—that is certain—as on our being in a state to be forgiven.

A boy had committed one of those acts of cruelty that children are sometimes guilty of. He had hurt his new puppy deliberately, just to show his power, by dragging at its leg with a rope till it was sore and bleeding. His mother was grieved at his cruelty, and the more so as just such a trait, unchecked, had marred the character of one of her own brothers. She dreaded its appearance in her little son.

And the boy would not be sorry. He was a self-willed child and resented being made to feel in the wrong. It was an unhappy evening, and when he went to bed he sulked and would not respond to his mother's good-night kiss. There was no forgiveness possible while he was in that state. The next day he awoke with a cloud on him, which somehow refused to be dispelled even at school, and at tea-time there were traces of tears on his mother's face—the mother who had always been such a good pal to him.

Bedtime came again at length, and he lay

there, feeling all unblessed—and then seeing, as one does at the close of the day, pictures in the darkness. The first picture was of Jock's leg, torn and bleeding from the rough rope, then Jock's pathetic brown eyes looking at him so trustfully. And then somehow it was his mother's loving eyes he saw.

It was then that the door opened, and she came in. He pretended to be asleep, and she gave a little sigh, and bent and kissed him. A moment or two she stood silent, and then turned to go. 'Mummy!' he cried—he could not let her go like that—'I am sorry. I really am.' (But her arms were round him now.) 'And I won't ever do it again. It was hateful of me. And I ought to be punished—you can punish me just how you like.'

Sir Francis Drake.

On January 9, 1579, his ship, having a large wind and a smooth sea, ran aground on a dangerous shoal, and struck twice on it; knocking twice at the door of death, which, no doubt, had opened the third time. Here they stuck, from eight o'clock at night till four the next afternoon, having ground too much, and yet too little to land on; and water too much, and yet too little to sail in.

. . . Then they, conceiving aright that the best way to lighten the ship was, first, to ease it of the burden of their sins by true repentance,

humbled themselves, by fasting, under the hand of God. Afterwards they received the communion, dining with Christ in the Sacrament, expecting no other than to sup with Him in heaven. Then they cast out of their ship six great pieces of ordnance, threw overboard as much wealth as would break the heart of a miser to think of it, with much sugar, and packs of spices. . . .

Then they betook themselves to their prayers, the best lever at such a dead lift indeed ; and it pleased God that the wind, changing from the starboard to the larboard of the ship, cleared them off to the sea again, for which they returned unfeigned thanks to Almighty God.

Thomas Fuller.

There is a Chinese proverb which says : Let every man sweep the snow from before his own doors, and not busy himself about the frost on his neighbour's tiles.

Those who are familiar with the story of Paradise and the Peri will remember how the Peri strove to gain admittance at the gates of Paradise. The angel told her that there was one hope—that she might yet be forgiven if she would bring to the eternal gate the gift which was most dear to heaven.

The Peri wandered everywhere, sweeping

all lands with her swift wings, searching for some rare and precious thing to offer at the barred gate. Amid scenes of carnage she found a hero dying for liberty, and caught the last glorious drop of his heart's blood. With this she flew up to the gate, but precious as was the offering, the gate did not open. Next she came to a dying lover, and stealing his farewell sigh as his betrothed hung over him, she carried this on high, but still the crystal bar was fast. Again she wandered, and came at length upon a wretched criminal, stained by many sins, but now weeping in bitter penitence. The Peri caught up the holy tear of contrition, and swiftly bore it up to heaven, and, lo, the door flew open to admit both her and the precious gift.

The story is told of a father who was anxious to cure his little son of a fault. When he fell into the sin he was to drive a nail into a piece of wood, and when he was sorry he was allowed to pull it out. It was a successful device, for the child learned to conquer his failing. But it was remembered that though the nails were removed, the marks remained.

There is a story of two men who were struggling in the water in danger of drowning. Feeling at the point of death one began crying for mercy for his sins. 'Hold on, man,' cried the

other. 'Don't give yourself away. I see land. We're safe.' It was penitence on the cheap.

In a dense jungle in Bhutan there is a lodge where men could take shelter in case of danger, and each hunter carried a key of this lodge. One day a hunter started out, gun in hand, but was pursued by a tiger and, throwing his gun aside, he ran towards the lodge. But, alas, he had left the key behind, and just as he approached the door and was fumbling for it, the tiger leapt on him and killed him. Just the thickness of the door, less than an inch, between him and safety, and yet he perished.

Though near to the kingdom of God, many Christians are very careless about the key of prayer and repentance.

Sadhu Sundar Singh.

PERSEVERANCE

The life of Sir Arthur Pearson (told by Mr. Sidney Dark) shows an extraordinary perseverance—one of those qualities which helped to make him so useful to his fellows when the great darkness fell upon him. It appears that an original prize was given by a weekly paper to the successful competitor in a series of one hundred and thirty questions, questions of a most difficult nature. The prize was no other than a clerkship in the office of the paper. Young Pearson set his heart on winning this clerkship, and three times a week he rode over on his high bicycle to the Free Library at Bedford to look up books of reference. His perseverance resulted in his ultimately becoming successful.

The same quality of grit appears in his early attempts to augment his salary by free-lance journalistic work. He would write an article, and dispatch it to a paper for acceptance. In due course it was returned—to be dispatched again to another journal, with the same result. It was sent off again, and yet again. His refusal to accept defeat was a sign of his persistence. In one year he is shown as having dispatched two hundred and fifty-one articles,

and fifty-eight were accepted. It was this perseverance which led to his ultimate success.

Perseverance means for us mortals—not an unbroken record of victories, but a dogged purpose of going on though we should stumble at every step.

George Tyrrell.

When Thomas Carlyle had finished his great book, *The French Revolution*, the fruit of many years of labour, the manuscript was burned by a careless maid. Undaunted, Carlyle set to work again and completely re-wrote the book.

The old alchemists, searching for the great secrets of science, knew well the value of perseverance. Such a philosopher would carry on his experiment for many a long year, only to end perhaps in catastrophe, to find that all that remained at the last stage of his work was a shattered vial, and the precious elixir spilt and lost. What then? It was but to begin again, having learned by failure to avoid that particular error. Time was to him eternal, effort and sacrifice were as nothing; all that mattered was the obtaining of the precious treasure to which his life was devoted.

PRAISE

In his poem *The Boy and the Angel*, Browning tells a curious legend. The boy Theocrite praises God day and night, but he prays that he may become Pope that he may praise Him better. His prayer is granted. He falls ill, and is carried away by an angel to become a priest, and at length becomes Pope. But meanwhile God had missed the boy's praise in which he used to take delight, so the Angel Gabriel descends to earth, takes Theocrite's place, and praises God continually.

But God finds a difference between the angel's praise, which is unmixed with doubt or fear, and that human praise which He loved. So Gabriel flies to Rome, where Theocrite has just been consecrated Pope. He tells Theocrite to go back to his old home, and take up again the praise which God had missed, whilst he himself remains at Rome to play the part of Pope until Theocrite dies. Then the boy and the angel return side by side to God.

God Who created me
  Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free
  To run, to ride, to swim ;

Not when the sense is dim,
  But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember Him :
  Take the thanks of a boy.

H. C. Beeching.

When a man has such things to think on, and sees the sun, the moon, and stars, and enjoys earth and sun, he is not solitary or even helpless. What else can I do, a lame old man, but sing hymns to God ? If then I were a nightingale, I would do the nightingale's part ; if I were a swan, I would do as a swan.

But now I am a rational creature and ought to praise God. This is my work ; I do it, nor will I desert my post so long as I am allowed to keep it ; and I exhort you to join in this same song.

Epictetus.

PRAYER

At the end of the South African War our generals inaugurated a system of blockhouses throughout the country, and between the blockhouses organized lines of patrols.

We should have at each end of the day, morning and evening, a stronghold of prayer. But to make any progress in the life of prayer, there must be patrols of prayer in between, little thoughts of God, little ejaculatory prayers, or words of praise, offered up to Him in the stress of the day's work. So we shall be able to keep the enemy from breaking through in our friendship with God.

S. Isidore of Seville, who was a ploughman, made it a rule to pause every three hours in his work, to pray. The other farm labourers, caring nothing for religion, jeered at him, and finding that this made no impression upon him, they complained to his master, and accused him of wasting his time when he should have been working. So next morning the master watched him, and at nine o'clock he saw Isidore leave his plough, take off his cap, and bow his head in prayer. In a very short time he resumed his ploughing, and then it appeared to the

astonished master's eyes that Isidore's plough was throwing up two furrows instead of one.

'Master,' explained the ploughman, 'time spent in prayer is never wasted, for those who pray have God to work with them, and their work is quickly done.'

O God, Whom the world misjudges, and Whom everything declares, listen to the last words that my lips pronounce: 'My heart may go astray, but it is full of Thee.'

The last prayer of Voltaire.

He was a kind-hearted boy, and hated the thought of birds being trapped and maimed. One day he came in triumphantly to his mother, and said, 'Well, I've stopped those boys catching the little birds in their traps.' 'How did you stop them?' asked his mother. 'Well, I prayed that the traps might not act,' he answered. 'Did you do anything else?' said she. 'Yes, then I prayed that the birds mightn't go near the traps to get caught—and then—then I went and kicked the traps to pieces.'

No formal prayers, however beautiful they may be, can ever take the place of our own prayers. Supposing a little child has learned to read rather early, and is so pleased with his accomplishment that every time his mother

speaks to him, he gets down his book and reads out something to her. You can imagine her saying, 'My dear child, for goodness' sake put that book away, and talk to me yourself.' The mother will not mind if the child does not speak very fluently, or makes mistakes. She likes to hear him express in his own words what is in his mind.

There is a story of an old charcoal-burner and the devil. While he was at prayer the devil came to him and shot doubts into his mind. 'God knows what you want already. There 's no sense in prayer. You can't bend the will of God to your will. You can't influence God.' But the man would not answer. He continued repeating the Lord's Prayer. 'I will say it again and again until you go away,' he said, and went on praying. That was faith. Faith has to fight to overcome doubt.

A little child's prayer : 'Pray God make all bad people good, and the good people nice.'

It is not that we are always thinking consciously about God. That would be impossible. But we should think about God as the ideal soldier thinks about his country, or the Irish exiles with the Old Pretender thought about that affection-compelling country. They ate and drank like other people. They loved

and they married. Yet they never swerved from the underlying attitude of loyalty and affection to their homeland. It dictated their action, it governed their policy, it explained their psychology. So it is with prayer. We think of other things, we laugh and chatter or weep like other people ; but underneath it all our souls are at attention. They stand in the presence of God, they watch Him for the smallest indication of His will.

Bishop Walter J. Carey.

The sort of illustration (says Bishop Carey) which rises to my mind in connection with prayer is that of the dog which wants to go for a run, and lies on the carpet with his eyes on you while you write a letter.

He doesn't bark or whine, but just looks, watches. If you raise your eyes he wags his tail. His appeal though voiceless is simply eloquent. It is an attitude which expresses a relationship of faith, affection, patience, and of implicit trust in your goodwill. I know of no better illustration of the true attitude of the self towards God ; it can truly be called prayer. You see how it implies a previous thinking and recognition. The dog would not do it for a stranger, it would whine distressfully and scratch at the door. But for its master it waits, because it knows him.

Most of us have heard the story of the old man who prayed the same prayers all his life, and when he came to the age of seventy-five he was still saying, ' Bless Thy little lamb to-night.' How much he had missed by a lack of enterprise and advance.

We need to cultivate the spirit of enterprise in our prayers. We should enter into the field of prayer in the same spirit of adventure that is the secret of all the great conquerors and great colonists. It is the greatest of all adventures —the knowledge of God. Take as your illustration the map of the world, and compare the small size of the United Kingdom with the British Empire, and there you have a diagram of what enterprise will do.

Do not under-estimate the value of silence in prayer. We are all familiar with people who come to see us, and pour out such a torrent of conversation that when they have gone we say, ' Well, you know, I couldn't get a word in edgeways.' Sometimes it seems as if God must say to us, ' My child, be silent a little, and listen to what I have to say to you.'

Sometimes just the holy Name ' Jesus ' is all we need to say as we listen. S. Francis of Assisi could spend the whole night in prayer saying nothing else but ' My God and my All.' It is such moments of silence—such simple

words and phrases—which bring us into intimacy of converse with our Friend.

In her preface to *Vailima Papers*, the wife of Robert Louis Stevenson describes how, at family prayers at Vailima, the Samoans—men, women, and children—would troop in through the open doors to join the white family at their worship. Some would be carrying lanterns if the evening were dark, and all would move quietly and drop with Samoan decorum in a wide semicircle on the floor beneath a great lamp that hung from the ceiling.

On one occasion, she relates, Stevenson himself brought the service to a check. He had just learned of the treacherous conduct of one whom he had every reason to trust. That evening the prayer was unusually short and formal, and as the singing stopped he arose abruptly and left the room. 'What is it?' she asked. 'It is this,' was the reply, 'I am not yet fit to say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."'

Let thy soul walk softly in thee as a saint in Heaven unshod,
For to be alone with silence is to be alone with God.

A little child's idea of God's listening ear was that when she began her prayers God bade all the angels be quiet, saying, 'I hear a voice—a

little girl's voice,' and then the angels became perfectly silent until she said 'Amen.' The angels need not keep silence for God to listen to the humblest prayer, yet the child was not far wrong in picturing the heavenly Father's attention to the smallest of His children.

The God to Whom little boys say their prayers has a face very like their Mother's.

Sir J. M. Barrie.

A Soldier's Prayer.

Lord, I shall be very busy this day. I may forget Thee, but do not Thou forget me.

Sir Robert Astley, before the Battle of Newbury.

'Daddy,' said the boy, 'when shall I be old enough to stop saying my prayers?'

Little boy kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.

A. A. Milne.

A priest once complained to the Curé d'Ars that although he had done all he could, he found very little response in his parish to all his efforts. 'Are you sure?' was the reply. 'Are you sure you have done all you could? Have you fasted? Have you given alms? Have you prayed?'

RECOLLECTION

'WHEN,' says S. Francis de Sales, 'the father and mother of S. Catherine of Siena had deprived her of every opportunity of place and leisure to pray and meditate, our Lord inspired her to make a little interior oratory within her soul, into which, retiring mentally, she might, amidst her external affairs, have leisure in this holy solitude of the heart.'

'This exercise will not hinder us,' continued S. Francis, 'in whatever we are about. The pilgrim who takes a little wine to cherish his heart and refresh his mouth, although he stops a moment for it, does not interrupt his journey by doing so, but rather acquires strength to finish it with more ease and expedition, stopping only that he may go faster.'

John Tauler, a Dominican, was a great preacher of the fourteenth century, and became the leader of that organized society of priests and laity known as the 'Friends of God.'

Speaking of recollection, and of vocation, he says: 'One can spin, another can make shoes, and all these are gifts of the Holy Spirit. I tell you, if I were not a priest, I should esteem it

a great gift that I was able to make shoes, and I would try to make them so well as to be a pattern to all. . . . You may find people at the yearly market in the town, with buying and selling and all sorts of din and noise all round them, and yet they have their hearts so shut in with the Lord that nothing disturbs or distracts them. This is the best convent to live in, the blessed convent of communion with God.'

If your window is filled with coloured glass, you will see all other objects tinted with its hue. So, if the spirit is recollected, you will see and do all that comes before you through the day in the light of the love of God.

RELIGION

It is not a fact that religion has been tried and found wanting. Religion has been found difficult and not tried.

G. K. Chesterton.

The rapid spread of Mohammedanism is to a great extent due to the missionary spirit of its followers.

An English traveller in Africa tells of a new village which sprang up near a school where native Christian teachers were being trained. One week there arrived an Indian trader to set up his shop for supplying commodities to the wives of the teachers. The following week a second Indian trader followed, with his shop. As the Englishman walked through the village one day in the third week, he was astonished to see that these two Indians, who were Moslems, had erected their mosque, and from within could be heard the chanting of their prayer, *La ilaha illa llahu*—'There is no God but God.'

The packing was over, and the luggage dispatched for the summer holiday. The little daughter of the house was excited about the

coming glories of the seaside, but there was one sadness. She slipped into the empty church and knelt in the big pew to say a last prayer there before she went. 'O God,' she prayed, 'I've come to say good-bye. We're going for our holiday to-morrow, and I shan't be able to come to church again for a whole month!'

It is often so small a thing that will keep folks from religion. Often, too, just as small a thing which will bring them back.

In a certain poor parish a young mother lost her baby. She was very ignorant of religion, but had some hazy inherited idea that the presence of death required a 'blessed candle,' and she dispatched her two brothers, growing lads, to procure one at the oil-shop. There they were met with some puzzlement, but finally went on to the church. From that ignorant inquiry came the bringing back of the whole family to the Faith.

The water of life must be brought to people in such a way that they will take it. Indians do indeed need the Gospel, says Sadhu Sundar Singh, but not in the European cup. There is a story of a Brahmin who fell down in a railway station overcome by the heat. The station master was anxious to help and brought him water in a white cup, but he would not

take it. He would sooner die than break his caste. They brought him water again in his own brass vessel, and he drank it eagerly.

It is possible to know a great deal about God, but not to know God in any way. It is like the Indian student who had learned a great deal about the daffodil, had studied it for examinations, and knew Wordsworth's poem on the flower. But someone one day showed him a daffodil, and he could not recognize it.

Sadhu Sundar Singh.

An analyst may be able to tell you that milk is composed of certain elements. A little child, with no power to analyse or know its properties, will drink it and thereby be fed and grow stronger.

There are some who do nothing but analyse their religion. They do not live by it, or grow strong by its power.

A French priest noticed a man who came to church very regularly, and just sat through the service. One day he asked him, 'What do you do when you come to church?' 'I wait for the service to end,' was the answer. That may be the case with more of us than we should care to suppose. It is well to ask sometimes what it is we really come to church for.

RENUNCIATION

SELF must be lost before any joy worth keeping can be gained. Renunciation of self sounds hard, but in reality it is God's gate into happiness.

When I see an old boot lying in the road, I am always reminded of the word 'renounce' in the Church Catechism. It suggests a picture of a tramp who has had a decent pair of boots given him, and is able to cast away his dilapidated footgear.

A steam vessel came one day into port. She had been long at sea, for an accident had happened which had caused delay. The coal gave out; then bit by bit, all that would burn, cargo, stores, furniture, had to be sacrificed for fuel to bring the vessel home. And here she was, safe in port, but stripped of everything of value. Yet it was better to burn up all her cargo and stores than to perish at sea.

The beautiful city of Florence has witnessed some strange scenes in its day. In the carnival

of 1496 the monk Savonarola sent round from place to place his little band of street boys, who loved him so dearly, clothed in white. From house to house they went, collecting the implements of carnival. 'Bring out your vanities' was the cry. A strange enthusiasm seized the townsfolk. Out they brought their trinkets, their masks and dresses, their false hair and ornaments, their evil pictures and books, all that seemed to minister to sin. Vast piles were made and huge bonfires glowed in the square, while still the piles were heaped and the flames crackled, and the singing only hushed as the crowds listened to the Friar's voice. Then above all was lifted the new carved image of the little Child Jesus, borne of angels, with one hand raised to bless, and in the other the Crown of Thorns.

RESOLUTIONS

Father Hart tells the story of a little girl who came to make her resolution at the end of one of his children's missions. Asked what it was, she said with a somewhat virtuous air that she was going to keep all the commandments. 'Let's have something a little more definite, my child,' said the missioner. 'Suppose you run home and ask your mother what she thinks is the best resolution for you to make.' The child returned a little later with not quite so jaunty an air. 'Mother says I'd better stop slapping the children,' she said.

'Oh, Mummy, why is it?' said the child. 'It's so exciting promising to do things, and so dull trying to do them.'

He who postpones the hour for living aright is as one who waits for the river to flow by; but it glides and will glide on to all time.

Horace.

REVERENCE

The spirit of holy fear, the spirit of reverence, is the gift which God looks for specially among those who serve in the sanctuary.

Philip II was once watching a procession of the Holy Sacrament through the streets. As the Sacred Host passed by he noticed that every one knelt—but one. 'That man,' said Philip, 'is either a Jew or a sacristan'—either one who does not believe in Christ, or one who is always about the church!

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SPEAKING of the Blessed Sacrament, Father Vernon says :

There were always special places and a special presence of God. You say to Moses, ' Where is God ? ' He says, ' God is everywhere.' ' Is He in any special place ? ' And the answer comes back : ' Yes, in this burning bush, and I take off my shoes because it is holy ground.' To a Jew of the Exodus you say, ' Where is God ? ' ' Everywhere.' ' Is He in any special place ? ' ' Yes, in the Ark of the Covenant.' ' Solomon, you are a wise man. Where is God ? ' ' God is everywhere.' ' Is there any special place ? ' 'Yes, in the temple which I have built in honour of His Name, and where the whole Jewish race come to worship every year.' ' John Baptist, where is God ? ' He replies, ' He is everywhere.' ' Is He in any special place ? ' John Baptist lifts his hand and points to the Master, ' Behold the Lamb of God ! ' And so it goes on.

A mission priest in Africa was called to take the Sacrament to a dying man in a distant village. On his arrival he found all the Christians in

the place assembled awaiting his coming, and afterwards, surprised at the numbers, he asked why so many of them had come. 'Oh,' said the head man, 'how could we let our Lord come to our village for the first time without all being here to welcome Him?'

In the year 258 a little Christian boy was walking along the Appian Way alone, his face set towards Rome. He was carrying something very reverently and carefully, and in his face was the look of one set on a great errand.

He was Tarsicius, an acolyte who had been used to serving the altar in the Christian services in the catacombs. There were many who met there week by week, but there were many more Christians languishing in the emperor's prisons at Rome, and the priest was anxious to send them the Holy Sacrament, to comfort and strengthen them. It was a difficult and dangerous errand, for the Christians were spied upon, and he did not know whom to send. It was then that little Tarsicius cried, 'Send me!' And he was sent. They thought no one would notice a little boy with a bundle. So they wrapped the Holy Bread in a napkin and gave it to him. He was to go into the city by the Appian Way, and across the Forum to the Mamertine prisons. But he did not get very far. Something joyous in his face, something reverent in the way he carried his treasure,

caught the attention of the soldiers. They asked him what he carried. But he would not tell them, nor uncover the Sacred Bread to their eyes. They raised the cry, 'A Christian! A Christian!' and surrounded and stoned him.

It was his guardian angel who carried his deathless spirit back to the Eternal Father. But when the soldiers uncovered the napkin the Holy Bread was not there.

A little child finds small difficulty in grasping the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. 'How did you get on at church? What did you do?' asked a mother of her little boy when he returned one Sunday morning. 'I sang some of the hymns,' said the child. 'I didn't know all of them. They had one when the choirboys came in, and another one afterwards. And then we sang one kneeling down. And *that* was when Jesus came.'

A lady who was ill with consumption was sent to Florida for the winter. She wrote to her friends glowing descriptions of the climate, the wonderful foliage, the luscious fruits. She spoke of the table, how at every meal it was spread with tempting fruits, but she always finished with one lament, 'But, alas, I have no appetite! If I only had an appetite I am sure I should

soon grow well amid such luxuries.' In a short time came the news that she was dead—dead in the midst of plenty—not for lack of food, but for lack of appetite. It is a picture of souls who starve in the midst of stores of spiritual grace.

SEEING THE BEST

After a confirmation, Bishop King of Lincoln was sitting in the study of the country vicar, and hearing what an uphill task had to be faced in the rural parish. 'The people are so dull, so unspiritual,' said the priest. 'I seem to make no progress at all. They simply do not grasp things. What do you think happened only a week or so ago? I was asking one of my farm boys, whom I had prepared for confirmation most carefully a year ago, whether he made his preparation before coming to Communion. He said yes, he did. So I asked him how he prepared. "Well," he said, "I always clean my boots and put them outside the door on Saturday night when I'm coming to Communion in the morning." Did you ever hear anything so hopeless?' 'Yes,' said the bishop, with a tender twinkle in those wonderful blue eyes of his, 'but I expect his guardian angel is pleased when he sees the boots!'

It is a venerable fact that, if a man or woman makes a practice of, and takes a delight in, believing and spreading evil of people indifferent to him or her, he or she will end in believing

evil of folk very near and dear. It is another very aged fact that, in life as well as racing, all the worst accidents happen at little ditches and cut-down fences.

Rudyard Kipling.

In the gutter of the market-place of an Eastern town lay a dead dog, to the disgust of the passers-by.

'How loathsome,' said one, and turned his head.

'Pah! How he stinks!' said another, and held his nose as he passed.

'Look at his protruding ribs!' said a third.

'He has not enough whole skin on his carcase to make even a shoe-string!' said a fourth.

'No wonder he came to a bad end!' said a fifth.

Then a gentle rebuking voice broke in on the chorus of calumny, saying, 'Pearls are not equal to the whiteness of its teeth.' And the people drew away, whispering, 'Surely that must be Jesus, for who else would say a good word for a dead dog?'

Told on ancient tablets.

There is a way to immortality (says Sir James Barrie), but not so easy as you think. Go through life without ever ascribing to your opponents motives meaner than your own. Nothing so lowers the moral currency. Give it up, and be great.

When Cardinal Borromeo was travelling through his vast diocese of Milan, he once had to cross a deep mountain stream, and was carried across by a ferryman on his back. The man, finding the stream too strong, grew afraid, let go of the cardinal and swam ashore. The cardinal, with some difficulty, swam ashore also. The man was found and brought before him in abject terror, expecting the worst. But the cardinal paid him his fee, saying quietly, 'You did what you could.'

SELFISHNESS

THERE is a quaint Russian tale of an old woman who had lived an extremely respectable but entirely selfish life. At length she died, and was astounded, after living so blameless a life, to find herself, not at the gate of Paradise, but banished to the lower regions. She made such a disturbance down there that an angel was sent down to see what it was all about. 'There 's a great mistake,' she cried to him. 'I've been sent to the wrong place. I ought to be up above ; I've always led a most respectable life.' 'Well,' said the angel, 'that may be. But have you ever done anything for other people ?' She thought desperately, and at length—'Yes, I have,' she said. 'A beggar came to the door one day, and I gave him an onion.'

The angel went to see. 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'we've got your onion. I will let it down to you, and if you can pull yourself out by it, you can come up.' So the onion was let down, and the woman clung closely on to it. Gradually she began to feel herself being pulled up. But the other souls in the pit, seeing her struggling to get out, clung to the onion too. 'Leave go, leave go!' she cried in an agony, pushing them down, 'it's *my* onion !' But that settled the

matter. It was her old lifelong habit of thinking only of self—and back she slipped where her selfishness had brought her.

'I poured praise into him,' said a Cornish evangelist, speaking of one of his failures, 'and it came out prayer—and all for himself.'

In the life of Sadhu Sundar Singh the story is told of a Thibetan who joined him when crossing some mountains in a heavy snowstorm. So bitter became the cold that the two doubted whether they would reach their journey's end, when, looking down, they saw, some way below, a man lying unconscious in the snow. The Sadhu hurried to the rescue, calling on his companion to help him carry the man to safety, but the Thibetan refused. He could hardly, he said, save himself, and hurried on alone. Down the steep mountain the Sadhu went, gathered the unconscious traveller in his arms, and struggled as best he could along with him. Further along the road he came across a form, cold and dead in the snow. It was the Thibetan who had left him ; seeking to save his own life, he had lost it, whilst the Sadhu, kept warm by his exertions in saving the life of the wayfarer, reached the next village in safety with him.

The Sadhu tells of a region in North India where travellers in the mountains carry a small vessel, filled with burning coal, and covered with cloth and woven strings, under their arms to warm them on their icy journeys. Three men were thus travelling on a pilgrimage. One of them saw how intensely many of the pilgrims were suffering from the cold, and taking the fire from his vessel, he lighted a fire at which all could warm themselves. Later on, the whole party came to a place where they were overtaken by darkness, and the second man gave his fire to light a torch which should guide them all. 'What fools you are,' said the third man. 'You have wasted your warmth on others.' 'Where is your fire?' they said to him. But when he opened his vessel, it was but dead ashes. The fire he had so jealously kept to himself was of no value.

SERVICE

In Sir James Barrie's novel, *The Little Minister*, Gavin is pictured as very tired at the end of the day, and his mother says to him, 'It is hardly fair that your hands should be so full of other people's troubles.' 'They only fill one hand, mother,' he says. 'I carry the people's joys in the other hand, and that keeps me erect, like a woman between her pan and pitcher.'

There is a characteristic story of Sir Bartle Frere. A man who was to be his host, but who had not met him previously, asked to have him described. 'Oh,' was the reply, 'if you see a big man who is always helping somebody, that 's Sir Bartle Frere.'

No gospel founded on hate will ever seize the hearts of our people. There are four words of salvation for this country and the whole world—and they are Faith, Hope, Love, Work.

No Government in this country that has not faith in the people, hope in the future, love of its

fellow men, and that will not work and work and work, will bring this country into better days.

Stanley Baldwin.

On the seal of an old missionary society an ox stands between an altar and a plough, and below is the motto 'Ready for either'—ready for service or for sacrifice.

Rahere, the Jester of King Henry I, had lived a wild and careless life, and when he fell ill and thought death was approaching, he was terrified. Frantically he prayed that his life might be spared. It was S. Bartholomew's Day, and that night he dreamed that the saint appeared to him and said, 'What will you do, if your life is spared?' He thought for a moment, and then said, 'I will build a church for the glory of God.' But the saint shook his head. Rahere thought again, and said, 'I will build a hospital to care for the sick.' But again the saint shook his head. In despair he cried, 'If my life is only spared, I will build both the church and the hospital,' and then the saint smiled. 'Your prayer shall be granted,' he said. 'A church for God would be a one-sided offering. A hospital for man would be one-sided too. The true offering must combine the service of God and man.'

S. Bartholomew's Church and S. Bartholo-

mew's Hospital stand to-day side by side in London, both built by Rahere the Jester as the result of that dream.

A wonderful building stood complete, save for the final touches that would perfect a fabric of artistic beauty rarely seen before. A young man, with the light of eager enthusiasm flashing in his eyes, pleaded with the architect. 'May I have a share in the work?' he cried. 'May I do some little thing? Do you think I could paint one panel of the great west door?' But he had no talent for that. 'Well, if that may not be, may I at least hold the brushes for some artist who is more competent than I to do the work?'

A short life in the saddle, Lord,
Not a long life by the fire.

L. I. Gurney.

A legend is told of some mediaeval saint, who was the wife of a rich nobleman in the north of Italy, full of duties and domestic cares, which she strove not to neglect, while giving the best of her heart to God. One morning when, as she thought, her household cares were over, she retired to her oratory and began to say her office. She had only just got to the third verse of the psalm when she was called away to some

commonplace duty, and without hesitation she left her prayers to fulfil it, returning as soon as it was done. Three times over this happened before the saint could get to the end of the psalm, and when for the fourth time she began to recite it, behold the verse was illuminated in letters of gold.

'Weel, a' we can dae noo, Weelum, gin we haena mickle brichtness in oor ain hames, is tae keep the licht frae gaein' oot in anither hoose.'

Ian MacLaren.

The world is full of willing people—some folks ready to help, and others willing to let them.

They buried him among the kings because he had done good toward God and toward his house.

Inscription on the tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey.

God will not ask thy race,
Nor will He ask thy birth :
Alone He will demand of thee ;
What hast thou done on earth ?

She was little more than a child herself, but the mother had died young, and she, the eldest

of the family, had had to bring up the younger children as best she could. It was a hard life for a girl, and though she sent the children to school and church, she had no time, with washing and mending, cooking and washing-up, for such things.

Then she was taken ill, and the arduous days were over. She lay a-dying. 'Will you say a prayer to our Lord, dear?' asked one who visited her. But she had never had time to learn prayers. She had been too busy always. 'But He will understand, won't He?' she replied, looking at her work-stained fingers, 'I'll just show Him my hands.'

'All service ranks the same with God.' It makes very little difference whether a man is driving a tramcar or sweeping streets or being Prime Minister, if he only brings to that service everything that is in him and performs it for the sake of mankind.

Stanley Baldwin.

S. Notburg was a little Saxon servant maid, who when only sixteen years of age was sent to be kitchen-maid in a nobleman's castle. Much food was sent down from the great banquets, and was thrown away and wasted. So the new kitchen-maid began to collect it, and carry it down to the town to give to the poor. The mistress, however, was a very stingy woman,

and when she discovered what was happening she scolded the little maid severely, and told her she was in future to collect the scraps and feed the pigs with them.

But what then about the poor folk who had come to be dependent upon her? Notburg feared they would starve without her help, so she trained herself to live on a crust of bread and a cup of water, and carried her own meals down to the starving townspeople. The story was told of her, after her death, that one day her master met her as she was carrying down her dinner, and threatening to thrash her, made her show him what she was hiding in her apron. Trembling she unwrapped it, and then a kind of miracle happened, for all that her master saw was a bunch of wild flowers.

In his *Conjuror and Confederate*, Mr. E. V. Lucas lets the rabbit tell his story. It is he who goes to the children's parties, and who plays the important part of being produced from the hat. And he feels his responsibility, and the joy of being able to help. 'What sort of a life do you think I should have,' says he, 'if I could not help my master?'

There should be some such spirit in our desire to co-operate with our Divine Master.

The glory of life is to love, not to be loved ; to give, not to get ; to serve, not to be served.

When Cardinal Borromeo was Archbishop of Milan in 1575 the plague broke out fiercely in two quarters of the city. Every one who could afford to do so fled and sought safety in the upland country. But the cardinal, who was in Rome, hurried back to Milan on hearing the news. He met many coming from the city, but not one going to it. He set quietly to work, repaired the old ruined hospital, cared for the bodies of the citizens, and began to minister to their souls. Through all that terrible time he worked indefatigably, his spirits never declined, he was the most cheerful of all his band of helpers. Then famine fell on the city, and after that the winter. The factories stopped working. There were no clothes to be had. The cardinal hunted up every stitch of clothing he possessed, cut up his furs and robes and gave them away. He found one day some large bales of cloth, and asking what they were, was told they were to lay on the floor of the cathedral for processions. In three days they were all turned into capes and cloaks for the poorest people.

SIN

Sadhu Sundar Singh has a story of a village girl who was cleaning a room, and she prayed : ' Lord, as I am cleaning the cobwebs from this room, cleanse my heart of all sin.' And a reply came, ' Daughter, what is the use of sweeping away the cobwebs every day ? It is better to kill the spider ; then there will be no more cobwebs.'

You cannot remove the blackness of coal though you cleanse it for ever with water or soap. But, put it but in the fire, and the blackness is lost in the glow of the fire.

There is a striking story of Danton which illustrates mortal sin. On the night before his execution they came to him and said, ' You didn't really mean it. You didn't mean that all these people should be guillotined ? ' And his answer was, ' I looked my crime in the face, and I did it.'

There was an old Scotch woman who could not pay her rent and her landlord threatened

to seize her goods. A good friend heard of her plight, and went to her house to offer her money to save her property, but when he knocked again and again he could not get in. He met the old woman next day, and told her of his visit. 'Was that you?' she cried in amazement. 'I thought it was the officer come to take my goods, and I barred all the doors and windows.' It is sometimes so when Christ knocks at the door of our hearts—we take such pains to keep Him out.

A king owed a large sum to one of his nobles, but could not pay it. The nobleman made a great feast in the king's honour, and upon the hearth burned a fire of perfumed woods. During the feast the host brought forth all the king's notes and flung them on the fire, destroying in a moment all record of his debt.

In some such way does God do away with our sins in the fragrant flames of our Lord's sacrifice.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

A MAN once pulled down an outbuilding that had stood for many years in his yard. He smoothed over the ground and left it, giving it no further thought. But when spring came, the warm rains fell upon it and the sunshine flooded it, and in a few days there sprang up multitudes of little flowers, unlike any that grew in the neighbourhood.

Where the building had stood was once a garden, and the seeds had lain in the soil without moisture, light, or warmth all the years. So soon as the sunshine and the rain had touched them they sprang up into life and beauty.

Gazing at the stupendous wonder of the Niagara Falls, a traveller was told that if the great waters were not always moving they would speedily become frozen. In much the same way, if the Christian soul is not constantly doing its best to respond to grace, it becomes cold and atrophied.

The great desire of a certain Spanish lady was to erect a church in honour of one of the

divine attributes. 'When I build it,' she said, 'it shall be dedicated to the divine patience.' The church was erected, a glorious building of white marble, on the spur of one of her native mountains. At last the shrine was finished and ready for consecration, and the architect sent for her that she might view it. But when she arrived, she was greatly distressed. What was wrong? asked the architect. Had he not taken every care to carry out her wishes? 'Ah, but see,' said she, 'you have forgotten to inscribe His Name.' So the scaffolding was put up again, and over the great west door was cut the simple word 'Patience.'

'God has been so patient with me,' she said.

The story of Michael Angelo and his statue is well known. In Florence there lay in the great square a colossal but shapeless mass of marble, from which many a sculptor had attempted to carve a statue, but had failed, and but marred the block in his failure. Michael Angelo looked upon it, and saw, as it were, concealed in it, a divine statue. He asked to be allowed to try his hand upon it, and his request being granted, he built a great hoarding round it, and set to work, flying upon the marble, it is said, more as if he were tearing a veil from a hidden figure than chiselling one out. The result was the glorious figure of David still in Florence.

SUFFERING

When Buddha lived on earth, a poor mother came to him one day for help. Her child lay dead in her bosom, poisoned by a snake. But she could not bring herself to believe that he could be dead, and she came to the holy man, praying a cure. Buddha looked on her tenderly, and told her, Yes, there was a cure. If she could obtain a tola of black mustard seed she might yet save her son's life. But it must be given her as a free gift, and above all it must be given by one who had never lost any loved one or any slave by death.

So she went round from village to village, still clasping her dead child, and wherever she sought the cure, they gave to her willingly, 'for all the poor are piteous to the poor.' But, alas, as she questioned them, there was no house on which the hand of death had not been laid. So she came back to the Master, and told her tale. He smiled on her with great gentleness. No power of his could bring her child back to life, but she had learned that all hearts shared her grief, for all had known sorrow.

The Bishop of London tells the story of a

little girl of fourteen to whom he had to tell the bad news that she must lie on her back for two years, if her life was to be saved. She looked up into his face and said, 'Well, Bishop, it is an honour to share God's pain.'

Besides the gift of gold, our money, and frankincense, our worship, there is the last of the three gifts which the Wise Men offered.

I pass from the bright sunshine and the fresh air with the hum of insects all around into a sick room. Outside all speaks of life. I pass out of the bustle of the London streets into one of our hospitals. Outside there is the noise and stir of a great city, the business men hurrying along, the buying and selling, all speaking of life. Inside there is the quietness of the ward. Oh, how hard it must be to lie there all day offering the gift of myrrh ! Dear God, what shall I say to them that will not mock their agony ? Shall I tell them that their sickness is a blessing in disguise ? I think not. Shall I delude them with false hopes of a speedy recovery ? Or shall I not rather say to them— There is a gift more precious in God's sight than the gold which we can offer to Him, more precious than the most stately form of worship, and that is the gift of a loving, trustful heart which will trust Him whatever He sees fit to do.

If during life we offer to God our gold and

our frankincense, it may be that when the shadow of death closes round us and we enter into it, when we are about to return to Him from Whom we came, perhaps then He will give us the strength and grace to offer Him the gift of myrrh. *P. H. R.*

When the late Bishop of Zanzibar was in England it is recorded that he asked a certain priest to join the mission, but he excused himself, saying, 'I don't think I could live in Africa.' 'I don't ask you to live,' said the bishop. 'You can glorify God by your death.' It sounds a drastic answer, but it may have been the right one in the circumstances.

It is an old priest who tells this story, in Father Hugh Benson's *Light Invisible*. He is speaking of an old friend of his, a man on the Stock Exchange, who has devoted himself to work among poor and sick folk in London. He tells of how the man came to give himself to our Lord's service in this way.

One frosty morning he was riding on top of an omnibus past Marble Arch, when a poorly dressed man began to cross the road. He halted a moment to let the omnibus go by, when a cab came swiftly in the opposite direction. The man sprang quickly forward to avoid the horse, and the wheels of the omnibus passed

over his feet. Folks immediately ran to his assistance and helped him, but the memory of the man swaying on his crushed feet remained in the stockbroker's mind for many weeks.

The following summer, as he passed by Westminster Bridge, he saw a beggar seated, a dog beside him, between the steps and the wall. What caught his attention chiefly were the beggar's hands, which were lying bandaged on his knees. Somehow those quiet suffering hands fascinated him, and carried his mind back to the accident at Marble Arch earlier in the year.

It was later in the summer, when he was at home, that one of the maids was taken ill. It appeared, when the doctor was called, that an operation was necessary. The girl seemed to have no relatives, and his consent was asked for the operation. He asked for particulars, and was given them. 'It is not really serious,' said the doctor. 'It is an incision in the right side.' They went up together, and found the girl perfectly conscious and reasonable. She consented to the operation and it was carried out that evening and was quite successful.

But as he sat at his table alone, smoking and thinking, that evening, the man thought of the girl lying there with the bandage against her side, and the little wound beneath. He thought of those three strange happenings which had so affected him during the past year, and which

seemed to have some design, but he had no idea of what that design could be.

Within a month he was spending a week-end in the country at a friend's house, when the last incident occurred. It was autumn, and the trees were in full glory and the brambles weighed down with fruit. As he walked with his friend along the country road, they heard the laughter of children in the woods at the side. Then the sound of pattering footsteps, and a boy burst through the thin hedge, tripped in a bramble, and rolled in the ditch. He was up in a moment, laughing, but the man saw across his forehead a thin red line where a thorn had scratched him.

And then—all these experiences seemed to concentrate themselves on one Figure—with wounded Feet and Hands and Side—and a thorn-marked Brow.

Sorrow and suffering are so often looked upon as something that must spoil the life into which they come. Far from it. Looking back at the end of life, it may be that we shall see in suffering the source of the beauty and enrichment which has come into it, both for ourselves and others. It is related that in a certain Venetian glassblower's workshop a copper ladle was one day accidentally dropped into a vessel containing melted glass. It was of course thought that the mixture would be en-

tirely spoilt, but when it was poured out, it was discovered that a new and glorious ruby red—never before known—was the result.

We get a charm from sorrow, says Père de Foucauld. Sorrow accompanies us from birth to death. It purifies and ennobles us. It is because it is our inseparable companion that Jesus wished it to be His.

SYMPATHY

Mr. E. V. Lucas, in his *Old Lamps for New*, tells of a school where the children are trained, first and foremost, in sympathy. The mistress has a most original and practical method of teaching them.

'In the course of the term,' she says, 'every child has one blind day, one lame day, one deaf day, one maimed day, and one dumb day. During the blind day their eyes are bandaged absolutely, and it is a point of honour not to peep. They need assistance in everything, and other children are told off to help them and lead them about. It is educative to both of them, the blind and the helpers. There is no privation about it. Every one is very kind, and it is really something of a joke, but before the day is over the reality of the affliction must be apparent to the least thoughtful.'

The visitor goes down to the garden and begins talking to a little girl of about twelve, whose eyes are bandaged. 'Don't you ever peep?' he asks her. 'Why, no,' she says; 'that would be cheating. But I'd no idea it was so awful to be blind. You can't see a thing. One feels one is going to be hit by something every moment. Sitting down is such

a relief.' 'Are your guides kind to you?' he asked. 'Pretty good,' was the answer. 'Not so careful as I shall be when it's my turn. Those that have been blind already are the best.'

It was the School for Sympathy.

Keep your tents separate and bring your hearts together.

Arab Proverb.

Many stories are told of the late Bishop King of Lincoln, and of the saintliness of his life. It was shown perhaps most of all in that ready sympathy which could always put himself in another person's place. He was one Sunday staying with one of his clergy, and coming downstairs to breakfast, met the little daughter of his host. 'What are you doing with that big Prayer Book?' he asked. 'I've just been learning my collect,' she explained gravely. The bishop gave his charming understanding smile. 'Isn't it a hard one!' he said.

I lived as a child (says Mr. Stanley Baldwin) in the heart of Worcestershire. . . . Among the chief friends that I had in those days—they represented two sides of life, the industrial and the agricultural—one was a shepherd who could neither read nor write, but like many men of

those days who could neither read nor write, he was a great deal more intelligent than many who can do both now. He had a face like an old pippin, and he talked the undiluted tongue of our fathers. I learned much from him. Another man that I learned much from was one who had been a workman and who rose to be a manager, and who went to work at ten years old on a twelve-hours' night shift, thus being a link with an industrial past which, thank God, has passed away for ever. But with such friends of one's childhood it is little wonder that one learned a profound sympathy with, and affection for, the common man, of whom I am one, which has never deserted me and never will.

TEAM WORK

Mr. Rudyard Kipling has in his story, *The Ship that Found Herself*, a fine description of the first voyage of a newly-built cargo boat—one of the best of her kind. She sails, loaded with cargo, from Liverpool to New York. Every part of her has been built for service, from the iron frames to the high pressure cylinders, and with her new paint, her red funnel, and the house flag flying, she looks very fine indeed. But, as the skipper said at the outset, 'It takes more than a christenin' to mak' a ship. She 's just irons and rivets and plates put into the form of a ship. She has to find herself yet.'

It is when they are out at sea in the gale that the voices of the ship are heard. Each part is full of its own importance, and all resent the onset of the storm and blame the others. The thousands of little rivets appear to come in for most of the censure. They are holding the plates together, and everything seems to be pulling a different way, and each plate calls on them to be eased a little. 'No rivet forged can stand this strain,' chattered the rivets. 'No one rivet was ever meant to. Share it among you,' said the steam, who had been to sea before, and knew something of the business. 'The

others can have my share. I'm going to pull out,' says one of them. 'If you go, others will follow,' says the steam. And the rivet settles down once more firmly in his place.

In the end it is in the storm that each part finds its own particular piece of work, and responds to it. They discover, too, that they have been built to help each other, and that what they most resented in the other parts is in reality a source of strength to them. When they reach the end of the journey and have learned that lesson of co-operation, the several argumentative voices are silent, and a new voice—the voice of the ship—is heard. The ship has found herself.

TEMPTATION

Cardinal Manning was once asked, 'When shall I be safe from temptation?' And his answer was, 'Nobody is safe from temptation until he is dead.'

Where there is no temptation it is a sign that the devil does not think it worth while to take trouble. A struggling saint once had a vision of a great city. Outside the city was a pile of stones, on which two little devils were keeping watch. He saw, too, a religious house, and a whole army of devils were busy assaulting its walls. It was so well worth while to strain every effort to gain that fortress of God.

'Grannie,' said the child sententiously, 'if *I* had been in the Garden of Eden, and the serpent had offered me an apple, I shouldn't have taken it. I don't like apples.'

'Yes,' said Grannie, 'but supposing he had offered you some chocolates?'

'Oh—well—'

'Where wast Thou, Lord,' S. Catherine of Siena asked, 'when I was so sorely tempted?' And the loving Master replied, 'I was close beside thee, my child, beholding thy struggles for the love of Me.'

Temptation is overcome not so much by shutting the devil out, as by admitting God freely to every space in the garden of our soul.

THOUGHTS

GUARD well thy thoughts, for thy thoughts are heard in heaven.

Distracting Thoughts.

S. Francis de Sales used to relate how one day when walking in a garden where there were hives, the bees surrounded him, and he was about to try and drive them away. But an old peasant, who was near, bade him beware, because if he got excited the bees would pursue him, whereas if he let them alone they would soon cease to trouble him.

Every desire is a prayer ; every aspiration a step towards that to which we aspire. We build or destroy our ideals by each thought, by every hope or fear, by every effort or retreat.

Dresser.

TRUST

A NEIGHBOUR said to me one day, said a shepherd: 'Jean Baptiste, you are very poor?' 'Yes, that 's true.' 'If you fell ill, your wife and children would be destitute.' 'True.' And then I felt anxious and uneasy for the rest of the day.

But at Evensong wiser thoughts came to me, and I said to myself, 'Jean Baptiste, for more than forty years you have lived in the world, and God has cared for you. He has never left you without food and shelter. He has not sent you more than your share of sorrow, and He has given you the power to bear it. Jean Baptiste, be no longer ungrateful. How can you think that the Hand from Whom you have received so much will close against you when you grow old, and have more need of help?' So, said the simple shepherd, I finished my prayer, and felt at peace.

A traveller tells of having been at sea in a terrible cyclone, and seeing a little bird fly down, when the storm was at its height, and light there on the crest of a wave. It rested there as quietly as if it had been perching on some green bough in the leafy forest.

An old guide said to a tourist in the Alps, who was afraid to trust himself to the guide's hand to be helped over a perilous ledge : 'This hand never lost a man.'

In a poor back room in one of the most dismal parts of London lived an old woman. She was extraordinarily poor, but she seemed to have a most contented and happy mind. A visitor who used to come sometimes to see her found that one of her most cherished possessions was a strawberry plant, which flourished wonderfully in a broken teapot on her window sill. 'Your little plant is growing splendidly,' he said one day. 'I shouldn't be surprised if you had some fine fruit on it when the time comes.' 'Oh, it's not for the fruit that I think so much of it,' she said. 'You see, it's just this, that it's a living thing. I'm too poor to be able to keep a living creature of any kind. But when I watch this little plant and remember that it lives and grows by the power of God, it is a great comfort to me, for I know I can trust in Him too.'

A missionary in Africa, riding with his catechist to visit an old woman who lived in the mountains several miles from the church, came to a spot in the valleys which was a sort of highway for several villages. By the side of the

roadway he found a large stone set up, scratched roughly with a cross, and before the stone was placed a smaller one. He asked the catechist for an explanation. 'Oh,' said the catechist, 'it is these simple people. They come down these valleys in the early morning on their way to church. Then they have prayers in this place that they may be protected on the road. That is why the cross is here.' 'But why the smaller stone?' he asked. 'That is for our Lady,' was the reply. 'Let not the father be angry; it is a simple people.'

But it was not anger that filled the heart of the priest. It was shame for the weakness of his own faith as compared with that of these 'simple people.'

S. Thérèse of Lisieux tells of how one evening, when she was a child, she came home with her father late one winter's evening. The roads were muddy and frosty, and bad for walking, but the sky overhead was brilliant with stars, and looking up at that glorious pageant, she, childlike, imagined she saw her own initial outlined there. So, looking up into the heavens, and with one childish hand holding fast her father's, she trudged on, caring nothing for the muddy way. In some such fashion, holding fast the hand of the heavenly Father, and looking upwards, will the Christian find his footsteps safest on his pilgrimage.

SPIRITUAL VISION

It is said that S. Bridget of Ireland was once watching the sun set behind the Wicklow mountains in the company of a blind nun. She was filled with the beauty of the scene, and prayed that her companion might see it also. She then touched the eyes of the blind nun, and they were opened, and she saw the glory of the eternal hills in the light of the setting sun. Then turning to Bridget she said, 'Close my eyes again, dear Mother, for when the world is visible to the eyes God is less clear to the soul.'

'The Four Mills' is a quiet little red and brown picture by Matthew Maris. Two connoisseurs (writes Mr. E. V. Lucas) stood before it, admiring its beauty, on the day before its sale. 'Why is it,' one asked the other, an artist, 'Why is it so good?' 'It's partly,' was the reply, 'that he never wanted to show how cleverly he could paint. Everything has its true value. It's so simple and sincere.'

The sale proceeded, and finally the picture was sold for three thousand three hundred guineas. A large sum for a little paint? That is true; but a new world too. A world of

wistful beauty. And that, of course, cannot be appraised. It is cheap at all you have, if you desire it sufficiently.

It was S. John, the beloved disciple, who was S. John the Mystic. Nothing makes us so quick, so perceptive, as love. It is the child in the cottage who loves his father who is so quick to hear his footsteps as he returns, and runs out to meet him.

Henry Martyn says of himself: 'Since I have known God in a saving manner, painting, poetry, and music have had charms unknown to me before. Religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions from the sublime and beautiful.'

I have always had one lode-star ; now
As I look back, I see that I have wasted
Or progressed as I looked towards that star—
A need, a trust, a yearning after God.

Robert Browning.

It is said that a lady looking at one of Turner's pictures delineating some fine scene of nature, said to the artist, 'Mr. Turner, I can't see in nature what you put in your pictures.' And the artist replied quietly, 'But don't you wish you could ?'

VOCATION

If two archangels were sent down by Almighty God to do a piece of work for Him—one to be Bishop of London in Fulham Palace, and the other to be a policeman on point duty in Piccadilly Circus, neither would care a straw which of the two tasks was allotted to him. Each would be enraptured to do the will of God.

Your vocation may be to be a round peg in a square hole, or a square peg in a round hole, or no hole at all. But whatever kind of peg you may be, God knows, Who made the peg and made the hole that you are in.

It is not every one's vocation to be a round peg in a round hole. It was a square peg in a round hole which upon Calvary redeemed the world.

Sir James Barrie, in *The Little Minister*, tells how Margaret, Gavin's mother, decided that he was to be a minister before ever his first year of babyhood was over. In those days the first question asked of a child was not, 'Tell me your name,' but 'What are you to be?' And one child in every family replied, 'A minister.'

He was set apart for the Church as doggedly as the shilling a week for the rent, and the rule held good even when the family consisted of only one boy.

If some such spirit could be found in the Church to-day there would be no foreign mission problem, and no question of shortage of clergy.

'I shall only last a year,' cried Jeanne d'Arc, 'use me as long as you can.'

You may remember George Eliot's description of Romola's meeting with Savonarola.

Romola is fleeing from Florence in disguise —leaving her worthless husband, who was unfaithful to her. But Savonarola stops her on the road, and urges her to return to her duty. 'You are flying,' says he, 'from your debts: the debt of a Florentine woman, the debt of a wife. You are turning your back on the lot that has been appointed for you—you are going to choose another. But can man or woman choose duties? No more than they can choose their birthplace or their father and mother. My daughter, you are fleeing from the presence of God into the wilderness.'

Romola pleads with him, urging her sorrows. 'I am not going,' she says, 'to ease and self-indulgence. I am going away to hardship. I expect no joy. It has gone from my life.'

'You are seeking your own will, my daughter. But how will you find good? It is not a thing of choice; it is a river that flows from the foot of the Invisible Throne, and flows by the path of obedience. I say again, man cannot choose his duties. You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the sorrow they bring. But you will go forth; and what will you find, my daughter? Sorrow without duty—bitter herbs and no bread with them.'

'But if you knew,' she pleads again, 'how impossible it seemed to me to bear it.'

'My daughter,' says the priest, pointing to the cord round Romola's neck, 'you carry something within your mantle; draw it forth and look at it.' And, startled, she draws forth the crucifix.

'There, my daughter, is the image of a Supreme Offering, made by Supreme Love, because the need of man was great.' And, led by that example, Romola goes back to Florence.

An illustration of the refusal of vocation is given in Mr. E. V. Lucas's tale of the Fir Tree in *Old Lamps for New*.

The fir tree grew up straight and tall in a great Newfoundland forest. It was designed to become the mast of a fine ship, but its ambitions were greater than that, and when the surveyor came to the forest, marking each chosen tree for cutting down, the fir tree

laughed slyly, and induced a friendly squirrel to rub off the mark with his tail. So when the woodcutters came it was not cut down after all.

'I want to be something great,' it said. 'I want to be important, and to influence the world.'

And then one day the tree had its wish, for the woodcutters came again, but instead of picking out the tallest and straightest trees, they cut down hundreds just as they came to them. 'You're going to be made into paper,' said the sparrows. The tree nearly fainted with rapture. 'Then people will read me,' it said. 'I shall have something beautiful and grand printed on me—something worth reading.' 'You may, but it's not very likely,' said the sparrows.

Alas, when the time came, the tree was turned into a newspaper, and when it came to the light of day again it was covered with words. They were 'Society Divorce Case,' 'The Progress of the Strike,' 'Burglary at Potter's Bar,' and 'More Government Lies.'

And the next morning a man bought it for a halfpenny, skimmed it through, and said there was nothing in it. Then he threw it under the seat in his train, and another man took it home.

The following day an untidy woman lit the fire with it. It was an unimportant fire, and went out immediately.

THE WILL OF GOD

'GOD's will be done,' said the old doctor vehemently. He had just come in from his rounds, and something appeared to have ruffled him more than usual. 'It makes my blood boil to hear folks talk as if God's will were sickness and death and suffering. It's an insult to the Almighty.'

'But they say it when trouble comes,' said his wife in her gentle way, 'because they want to show their trust in God, whatever He chooses to send.'

'I've nothing to say against Christian resignation,' he responded. 'It's simply splendid to see the way in which some of the poor souls face their troubles. I know that. But they have no right to use only in that sense the finest war-cry ever given to God's people—a watchword only fit to be matched with the trumpet-call of Michael the Archangel—"Who is like God?" God's will is health, and strength, and good education, and happy children—and good work of all kinds. It ought to be the ideal for every architect, for every doctor, for every mother—as well as for every priest—that they should do their best to see that God's will *is* done. That 's what we're created for. It isn't

a pious expression to put on a tombstone—it's the call for the armies of the Lord, and not until we realize it and try to carry it out, will that most splendid of all prayers ever be fulfilled.'

There is a great description in Father Benson's book, *The Light Invisible*, of a nun in prayer in the convent chapel, before the altar with its little glowing light, telling of the Presence. It is all quiet and still ; she is there alone in the activity of prayer. Father Benson describes her as she kneels there so solitary, so alone, in her poor religious habit, huddled before the altar. Yet there she is at the very source, at the very spring, at the ultimate centre of all power, for there is beating in all its glow and heat the Sacred Heart of Jesus. There He is upholding all things by the word of His power—He on Whom all issues hang—and this poor nun by her prayer has stirred His will ; she has set in working the power of God, so that, through her prayer, pulsations of power go everywhere gloriously, triumphantly, as the will of God is set in motion. The power of prayer is something which is altogether beyond our knowledge.

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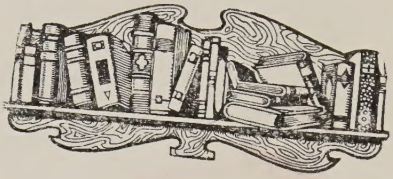

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